

# IN THESE TIMES

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The Bush  
boys and  
anti-Semitism

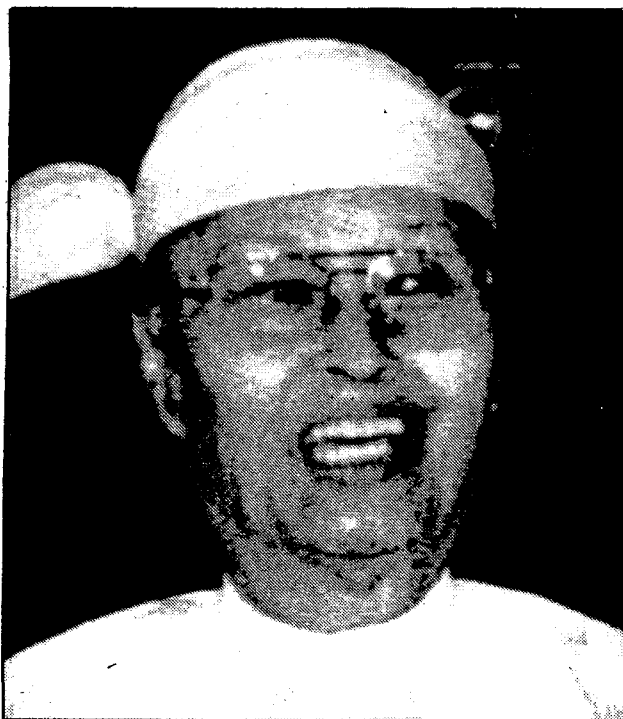
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## THE REAGAN REFUGEES



For the homeless  
it's a cold  
'Morning in America'  
pages 8, 14, 16 and 17





Gen. Ne Win: still in control?

## Behind the Burma crisis: U.S. policy from the '50s

By David W. Brown

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Despite four different leaders in Burma in just two months, it is clear that the military controls the Southeast Asian country—just as it has since taking power in a 1962 coup. Gen. Saw Maung, the latest leader, ostensibly took power in a mid-September coup. But as one Western diplomat told the *New York Times*, "It is not a coup. The army is in power already. How can you stage a coup if you are running the place already?" Gen. Ne Win, the former chairman of the ruling party, is widely thought to be still in control of the country, despite his formal resignation in July.

The latest leadership change has been followed by a bloody military crackdown against fierce anti-government protests that have been growing since March (see *In These Times*, September 7). As *In These Times* went to press, reports from the Burmese capital of Rangoon said that as many as 400 people have died in the latest round of unrest. The Reagan administration reacted by threatening to cut off aid in protest of Burmese soldiers' attacks on unarmed civilians. U.S. aid to Burma amounted to a paltry \$12.3 million in 1988, and although \$260,000 of it was for military training, even State Department officials admit that a cutoff would be primarily symbolic.

But if Washington can do little to ease the situation in

Burma, it bears much of the responsibility for the military coming to power in the first place. The current chaos, anarchy and violence are the bitter fruit of a CIA policy—ended by the mid-'60s—that constitutes one of the strangest and least-known chapters in the annals of post-World War II U.S. foreign policy. Washington is now learning a difficult lesson in Burma: it is much harder to take a military government out of power than to help put one in.

**Caught in the Cold War:** Burma was a British colony between 1825 and World War II. Suffering under a brutal Japanese occupation during World War II, Burma was the most devastated country in Southeast Asia at the war's end, when Britain granted the colony its independence. In 1948 the Burmese elected a Buddhist Socialist government to run their country, making Burma the first Southeast Asian country after World War II to practice self-determination.

The first major task facing the new Burmese government in the post-war years was the suppression of rebellious minority peoples and two different communist groups in northern Burma. But just as the Burmese government had cleared this hurdle by 1950, it suddenly had to confront a new enemy: the U.S.

When North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950, Burma became swept up in a conflict between superpowers. With China backing the North Korean forces, the U.S. began looking for a second front to open against the Chinese military. Washington found it in northern Burma, where Chinese nationalists known as the *kuomintang*, or KMT, had crossed into Burmese territory after being ousted by Mao's troops. The U.S. decided to supply arms and advisers to KMT forces in Burma. There was "indisputable evidence that the Americans were helping" the KMT to establish a foothold in northern Burma, according to a 1952 *London Observer* report. That U.S. support has been well documented in the decades since. Political scientist Rober Taylor, in a 1973 study, offered another possible motivation for CIA support of the KMT: "The CIA seems to have wanted to use the KMT primarily as a force to harass the Chinese government into invading Burma so as to force Burma into the Western camp."

KMT troops made at least three, albeit unsuccessful, forays into China from northern Burma. When the KMT wasn't attacking southern China, it was busy making alliances with the very same minority peoples and communist factions that had just been subdued by the Burmese government. The Chinese nationalists fought the Burmese army side-by-side with the Shan and Karen peoples. Two Burmese communist factions were also indirectly supplied with U.S. arms by the KMT.

In April 1953 the president of the India League of America was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying that Civil Air Transport, an airline closely connected with U.S. intelligence operations in Asia throughout the '50s, and subsequently absorbed by the CIA, was flying supplies to the KMT in Burma. In March of the same year three Caucasians, two of whom wore U.S. Army uniforms and possessed diaries and notebooks with New York City and Washington, D.C., addresses, were killed in a firefight between the KMT and the Burma army.

Two of the persons least informed about the involvement of the U.S. with the KMT were the two U.S. ambassadors to Burma in the early '50s, William Sebald and David Key. Both men resigned in protest of not being kept informed of their government's activities.

**The final cost:** The Chinese nationalists that the U.S. aided never proved to be much of a threat to the People's Republic of China, but they did prove to be a big problem for the Burmese. The KMT forces looted villages in the Burmese countryside and refused to be contained. Accompanied by CIA operatives and toting U.S. weapons, as many as 30,000 Chinese nationalists occupied a section of Burma the size of New York state by 1953.

Ultimately, the final cost of the U.S.' support for the KMT was the death of civilian government in Burma and of many Burmese as well. Democratically elected president U Nu held office through most of the '50s, but he met with only partial success in his efforts to drive the KMT out of his country. A "caretaker" military government, led by Gen. Ne Win, put into power by the Burma legislature in 1958, was supposed to suppress the rebellious minority and communist factions inside Burma.

After 1960, when the war in the north appeared to be under control, U Nu's civilian government came back into power briefly. Unfortunately, by this time the U.S. was embroiled in a new conflict in Southeast Asia—the Vietnam War. There was a resurgence of the KMT in northern Burma because the U.S. rehired the KMT mercenaries to fight in neighboring Laos, a key area throughout the Vietnam War. Consequently, the Burmese civilian government experienced what came to be known as "the second KMT crisis." As Taylor explained:

"By mid-February [1961] it was estimated that over 4,000 KMT's were established in eastern [Burma] at five bases. It would seem probable that the major reason for the KMT's maintaining their bases in Burma was in order to operate in Laos where, as a result of the 1954 Geneva accords, there could be no U.S.-supported bases. When the Burma army captured the headquarters of KMT Gen. Lao Li at [Kenglap, Burma] they reportedly found 'the general atmosphere one of American comfort.' They found ample supplies of U.S.-made weapons in crates with U.S. aid operations insignia stamped on them. Included in the reports were claims that the KMT possessed weapons as large as 75 mm anti-aircraft guns. At [Paliao, Burma] another KMT base, the *Rangoon Nation* reported that the KMT's had left behind 'bulldozers, rollers and other heavy equipment.'"

Once back in northern Burma, the KMT began to supply the Karen and Shan armies with materiel. It also resumed their attacks on Burmese towns and villages in the border area.

Civilian Prime Minister U Nu was deposed by Gen. Ne Win in March 1962 because Burmese society had been

## INSIDE STORY

thoroughly militarized after 10 years of fighting the KMT-backed minorities' rebellion. The final blow came when U Nu was unable to deal with the rise of a new insurgency by the Karen army. U Nu was on the verge of granting regional autonomy to the Shans and Karens, something that Ne Win found unacceptable. The warring minorities, more than any other factor, were responsible for Ne Win's seizure of power. This second KMT crisis occurred in precisely the "window" of U Nu's civilian government between the two Ne Win military governments.

**Drug trafficking:** Meanwhile, the KMT had begun opium production and smuggling as early as 1952. In the early '70s Burma was the largest opium producer in the world. KMT troops who stayed on in Burma controlled opium production in Shan state, 90 percent of which ended up in Saigon, where it went straight to the U.S. G.I. addict population, and in Bangkok, where, according to Alfred W. McCoy's *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, most of it was shipped to the U.S. Thus the American drug epidemic of the '70s was, in part, a direct outgrowth of the manner in which the U.S. waged the Cold War.

It is clear that civilian government in Burma was also a casualty of U.S. support for the KMT. The desire for control and power in the region was so important to the Americans that they provided guns, supplies and advisers over a 10-year period to an outlaw army that accomplished little, except to organize an important segment of the heroin trade and terrorize the populace of northern Burma.

Clearly, the loss of democracy in Burma was far too high a price to pay, whether to fight a losing war against China, or to try to drive neutralist Burma into the U.S.' arms or to fight in Laos. In any case, U.S. support for the KMT created the political space for the current harsh and inefficient military government of Burma to come to power, and retain power to this day. The struggle of the Burmese people against their government is the living legacy of a misguided U.S. policy that haunts Burma more than 20 years after it was officially ended.

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## The Congressional Black Caucus' leaders look toward the future

By Salim Muwakkil

WASHINGTON, D.C.

**T**HERE IS ALWAYS A STRONG SENSE OF PARADOX at the Congressional Black Caucus' (CBC) yearly conventions: well-to-do black Americans gather in opulence to bemoan black America's desperate plight. The group's "18th Annual Legislative Weekend" this year was no exception.

A glittering array of nearly 20,000 African-Americans converged here September 14-18 to discuss a political agenda, to help devise solutions for a community in increasing crisis—and to party. Some political organizers condemn these annual conventions as frivolous and ostentatious and pointedly refuse to attend.

"In many circles these Black Caucus affairs are big jokes," explained Richard Baldwin, a federal worker from Maryland. "They're known more for partying and showboating than for anything else."

And while some of that reproof is still justified, in the last few years the CBC's conferences have evolved into occasions of significant import. They bring together and offer unique access to specialists in fields crucial to the black community's well-being. They also provide concentrated sources of valuable, far-flung information that otherwise would be difficult to obtain. What's more, the confabs attract thousands of black people with similar concerns and the wherewithal to affect significant changes in the status quo.

**Ambitious schedule:** "I'm not entirely comfortable with the opulence and party-time atmosphere of these conferences," said Roberta Washington, a New York-based architect. "But there are trade-offs. You come in contact with people who possess real expertise, and the possibilities for serious networking are unrivaled."

This year's convention was the most comprehensive in the CBC's history. Its theme, "The Struggle Continues: A Look into the Future," was typically grandiose, but the organizers attempted to devise an equally ambitious schedule. The "legislative weekend" featured more than 50 issue forums, workshops and braintrusts. Each of the caucus' 23 members led a workshop or issues forum, the subjects of which ranged from "gang violence" to "black men and women: building bonds and healing relationships."

Included in these discussions were issues of civil and constitutional rights, redistricting and reapportionment, health and nutrition, foreign affairs and political coalitions. Although the organizers made some logistical errors (press accommodations were shoddy, some assistants were inadequately coached, telephone problems, etc.), their content selection was excellent. It was one of the most wide-ranging, talent-laden conferences in black America's history.

**CBC's growing power:** The convention's comprehensive approach may be a direct reflection of the Black Caucus' increased legislative scope. "The skyrocketing growth in homelessness, the erosion of our sense of community and the myriad of problems confronting our young demand that the CBC intensifies its level of advocacy," said Amelia

Parker, CBC's executive director. Parker said the group has amassed the most comprehensive legislation portfolio in its history.

"Since this Congress was sworn in, caucus members have introduced an unprecedented 421 individual bills and amendments," she said. Also unprecedented are the number of leadership positions held by the CBC's 23 members: they include chairmen of five full committees, two select committees and 18 subcommittees. For its size, the caucus represents one of the more influential power blocs in the House.

Still, black House members represent only 5 percent of the House total, while blacks account for more than 12 percent of the U.S. population. And, their legislative initiatives, are often ridiculed for their lockstep adherence to an unfashionable liberal perspective. Though their power is disproportionate the CBC's numbers are too small significantly to affect the direction of legislation.

**Future prospects:** The 1988 election may see the addition of two more members to the black caucus: Democrat Donald Payne is assured of succeeding Rep. Peter Rodino (D-NJ) and Democrat Faye Williams has a good chance of defeating incumbent Republican Clyde Holloway in Louisiana. She lost to Holloway in 1986 by about 2 percent of the vote.

Congressional observers contend, however, that those two seats are the only available ones on the near political horizon for black candidates. Researchers at the Congressional Research Service (CRS) have noted that the average district represented by a black member of Congress is about two-thirds black. Only two of the 23 CBC members—Reps. Alan Wheat (D-MO) and Ronald Dellums (D-CA)—represent districts in which whites are in the majority.

The CBC's non-profit arm, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, accordingly has launched a program to help devise redistricting approaches that could increase the black presence in Congress after the 1990 census. According to Dr. Linda Williams of the Joint Center for Political Studies, a Washington-based think tank that analyzes black politics, an equitable redistricting plan would result in at least one black representative each from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Arkansas and Louisiana.

**Black senators?** There have been no blacks in the Senate since Democrat Paul Tsongas defeated Sen. Edward Brooke (R-MA) in 1978. Ironically, all three of this country's black senators were Republicans—the other two served during Reconstruction. No black candidate has ever been nominated to the Senate on a Democratic ticket, according to CRS. This year in Virginia and Maryland, Republicans have nominated two black candidates for the Senate. Maurice Dawkins is challenging Democrat and former Virginia Gov. Charles Robb, and Alan Keyes is taking on Maryland Sen. Paul Sarbanes. The black challengers are solid underdogs.

Rep. Mickey Leland (D-TX) has announced that he will run for Sen. Lloyd Bentsen's seat if the Democratic presidential ticket wins. Leland also disclosed that Rep. Louis Stokes

(D-OH) would have been appointed to Sen. John Glenn's (D-OH) seat if Dukakis had picked Glenn as a running mate, and there are reports that Sen. Sam Nunn's seat would have gone to current Atlanta Mayor and former Rep. Andrew Young if Nunn had been chosen.

The demographic realities in Leland's potential race would preclude him from running as a black candidate. Similar realities are forcing black elected officials and political aspirants to increase their focus on coalition politics. One of the most heavily attended of the convention's forums was Rep. Walter Fauntroy's (D-DC) braintrust subtitled: "Black political empowerment in the era of coalition."

To enshrine this new strategy of coalition politics, the CBC has created an award called the Harold Washington Award for Excellence in Coalition Building. Significantly, the new honor was conferred on the concluding dinner's keynote speaker, Rev. Jesse Jackson, whose National Rainbow Coalition has embodied the concept. But other political observers argue that the Jackson model may not be sufficient to attract a critical mass of white voters. They contend that black politicians—most of whom are considered left-liberal in ideology—will also have to moderate their views if they want to attract a wider electorate.

Jackson's speech featured a ringing endorsement of Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis. "I have studied the options up close," he told the black-tie crowd of about 3,000. "I have counted the costs. I tell you without hesitation that Gov. Dukakis will take us in the right direction on the freedom trail." This was a Jackson crowd and he provoked it into a state of frenzy with his masterful rhetoric. Dukakis addressed the gathering following Jackson's stemwinder; never has the word "anti-climax" been so apt.

Since this is an election year, it's only nat-

ural that the sessions of political subjects attracted such spirited participation. However, the largest crowds were drawn to the forums and workshops that focused on social issues. As testimony relentlessly detailed the deteriorating conditions of health, housing, education, crime and drug abuse among African-Americans, the sense of crisis became palpable.

"Urgent action is needed on several critical issues," warned Rep. Major Owens (D-NY). "Massive long-term commitments in the nature and spirit of a Marshall Plan are needed. To save this generation of black youth we must declare a state of emergency." Owens' urgent argument was one variation on a common convention theme. And although most of those in attendance were personally untouched by the black community's various crises, they realized it wouldn't remain that way for long.

**Youthful promise:** "At Howard we're finding that a lot more students are volunteering to get involved in many things," said Valeynia Hinson, a 20-year-old student at Howard University here. "I see a lot more activity on the part of the students. A lot more pride in being black."

Jacquelyn Judie cites similar findings at the University of Missouri, where she is president of the Black Student Union. "I do see a lot more interest in politics and other issues among some black students, particularly the younger students," Judie said. "But I continue to run into a lot of student apathy."

Both students said the CBC convention provided them with a much-needed shot in the arm. "When we examine all of the problems in the black community, it's easy to get the idea that we're all poor and helpless," Hinton admitted. "But after coming to something like this and seeing all those thousands of vibrant, successful and super confident black people, I've been strongly inspired. We can do it." □

### Congressional Black Caucus lineup

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (listed by seniority):

**Augustus Hawkins** (D-CA)—Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor; Chairman, Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education.

**John Conyers Jr.** (D-MI)—Chairman, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice.

**William Clay** (D-MO)—Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations.

**Louis Stokes** (D-OH)—Chairman, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Chairman, Subcommittee on Program and Budget Authorization.

**Ronald Dellums** (D-CA)—Chairman, Committee on District of Columbia; Chairman, Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities.

**Charles Rangel** (D-NY)—Chairman, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control; Chairman, Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures.

**Walter Fauntroy** (D-DC)—Chairman, Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and Finance; Chairman, Subcommittee on Fiscal Affairs and Health.

**Cardiss Collins** (D-IL)—Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Government Activities and Transportation.

**Harold Ford** (D-TN)—Chairman, Sub-

committee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation.

**Julian Dixon** (D-CA)—Chairman, Committee on Standards of Official Conduct; Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee on the District of Columbia.

**William Gray III** (D-PA)—Chairman, Committee on the Budget.

**Mickey Leland** (D-TX)—Chairman, Select Committee on Hunger; Chairman, Subcommittee on Postal Operations and Services.

**George Crockett Jr.** (D-MI)—Chairman, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs.

**Mervyn Dymally** (D-CA)—Chairman, Subcommittee on Judiciary and Education; Chairman, Subcommittee on Census and Population; Chairman, CBC.

**Edolphus Towns** (D-NY).

**Gus Savage** (D-IL)—Chairman, Subcommittee on Economic Development.

**Major Owens** (D-NY)—Chairman, Subcommittee on Select Education.

**Alan Wheat** (D-MO)—Chairman, Subcommittee on Government Operations and Metropolitan Affairs.

**Charles Hayes** (D-IL).

**Floyd Flake** (D-NY).

**John Lewis** (D-GA).

**Kweisi Mfume** (D-MD).

**Mike Espy** (D-MS).



By Joel Bleifuss

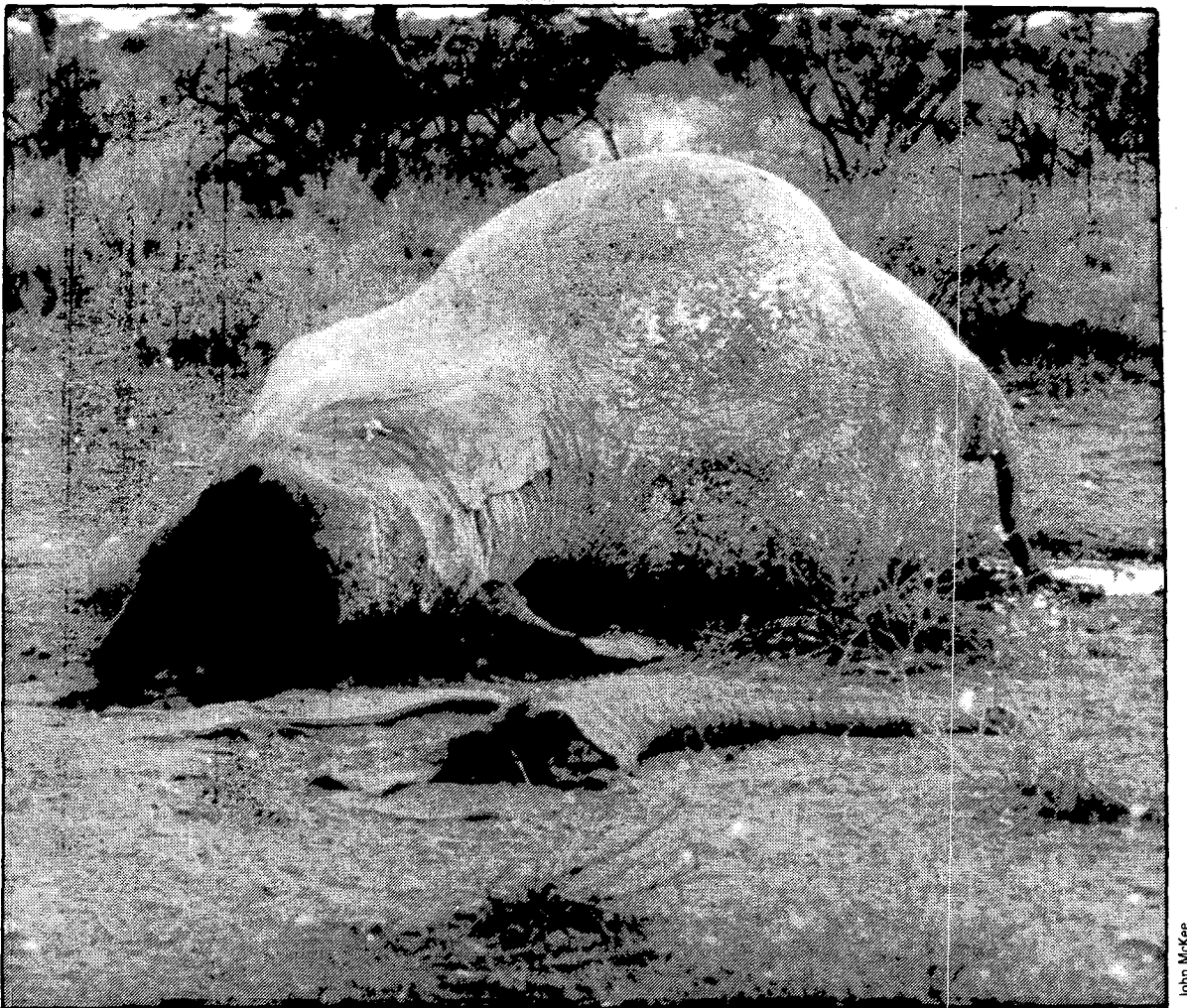
## A domestic covert operation

A recently released report by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs indicates that the Reagan administration's success in pushing its Central American agenda—specifically the spring 1986 House vote giving aid to the contras and granting the CIA permission to manage the war—was due to a “domestic covert operation” that the White House established “to lobby the Congress, manipulate the media and influence domestic public opinion.” This White House propaganda effort—masquerading under the title State Department Office of Latin American Public Diplomacy (S/LPD)—was staffed by “senior CIA officials with backgrounds in covert operations, as well as military intelligence and psychological operations specialists from the Department of Defense.”

**The ministry of information:** In June 1982 Donald Gregg, a senior CIA officer, left his position as head of the National Security Council's (NSC) Intelligence Directorate to become national security adviser to his former boss at the CIA, Vice President George Bush. Before departing, Gregg asked CIA Director William Casey and National Security Adviser William Clark to name as his replacement Walt Raymond, a CIA propaganda expert with a background in covert relations. Raymond negotiated his transfer from the CIA to the NSC with Casey and Clark, receiving their approval for his plan to establish a “public diplomacy program” within the NSC. By July 1983 his proposal had blossomed into the S/LPD. Over the objections of a turf-conscious Secretary of State George Shultz, President Reagan put control of this State Department operation (the S/LPD) in the hands of his new chief of the NSC Intelligence Directorate Raymond and his working group on Central American Public Diplomacy—a task force that included representatives of the United States Information Agency (USIA), the Agency for International Development (AID), the CIA, the Department of Defense and various NSC staffers, such as Oliver North.

**A “new product” and a little glue:** In August 1983 Casey discussed the S/LPD's mission with a group of public-relations specialists that include the head of public affairs at Philip Morris, Bill Greener. In a letter to National Security Adviser Clark, Raymond said, “[These public relations men] ‘stated’ what needed to be done to generate a nationwide campaign.... The overall purpose would be to sell a ‘new product’—Central America—by generating interest across-the-spectrum.” To continue “generating” this interest, in August 1986 the NSC and CIA brought on board Peter Dailey, a friend of Casey's and a successful advertising executive. Formerly the U.S. ambassador to Ireland, Dailey had successfully managed the U.S. propaganda effort on Intermediate Range Nuclear Force (INF) deployment in Europe. In a note to National Security Adviser John Poindexter, Raymond described a breakfast meeting with Dailey this way: “He believes that we are operating with a relatively narrow window in which to turn around American perceptions re contras—particularly Nic—or we will be chewed up by Congress. We discussed the obvious, which is part of our strategy, including such things as: the need to convince people of the key importance of contras to our national security; the need to glue white hats on our team, etc.”

**Psychological warfare:** According to an analysis of this White House propaganda apparatus by Robert Parry and Peter Kornbluh in the current issue of *Foreign Policy*, an unnamed NSC official who worked closely with North and Raymond said this NSC public diplomacy program was modeled after CIA covert operations overseas. “They were trying to manipulate [U.S.] public opinion...using the tools of Walt Raymond's trade craft which he learned from his career in the CIA covert operation shop.” Otto Reich, a former AID official, was named to head the S/LPD. In his letter appointing Reich, National Security Adviser Clark wrote, “The president has underscored his concern that we must increase our efforts in the public diplomacy field to deepen the understanding of and support for our policies in Central America.” So Reich went to work, augmenting his office's limited resources through personnel transfers from other federal agencies, including five intelligence experts who were brought up from the Army's 4th Psychological Operations Group at Fort Bragg, N.C. As an unnamed S/LPD official told the *Miami Herald* in July 1987, “If you look at it as a whole, the Office of Public Diplomacy [S/LPD] was carrying out a huge psychological operation, the kind the military conduct to influence the population in denied or enemy territory.”



John McKee

Last month poachers in Kenya's Shaba game preserve slaughtered this lactating female elephant for her ivory.

## Elephant culture threatened by towering ivory prices

High prices for ivory have made it a hedge against inflation, but they've also created an incentive for poachers that threatens to annihilate African elephant herds and destroy their complex social structure.

“The value of ivory has gone up because it is a commodity, like gold or silver,” says Diana McMeekin, vice president of the African Wildlife Foundation. “And people buy it because it represents something that will increase in value as time goes on.”

Ivory prices have risen from about \$2 a pound in the '60s to more than \$68 a pound today, McMeekin says. Some people are buying raw tusks and storing them in warehouses, waiting for the day when ivory and elephants are so rare that ivory prices will soar even higher.

Such speculation has spurred the poaching of African elephants that has cut the species' numbers in half since 1979. More than 700,000 have survived in Africa, but those numbers are not comfortably large ones, researchers and conservationists warn, since many of those elephants are young and will not get the guidance they need from their elders.

Like human children, elephant offspring depend heavily on their parents, but adult African elephants are prime targets for ivory poachers. “The poachers are going after the older, larger animals with the larger ivory tusks, and they are leaving be-

hind groups of animals who are without leadership,” McMeekin says. She says research indicates these immature elephants may be more vulnerable to predators, less able to handle themselves under adverse conditions such as drought and unable to reproduce successfully. Poachers kill as many as 70,000 African elephants a year, and an estimated 10,000 offspring will die as a result.

“Elephants are very much like humans in that they have a long, very dependent childhood,” McMeekin says. “They have to learn how to be elephants. They can walk when they're very small, but other than that they're just like human babies. They suck their trunks when they're nervous, and they depend totally on their mothers and their adult female relatives for about 13 years of their lives before they are independent at all. And even in the case of the females, they stay with their mothers and their aunts all of their lives. And it's only because the old females—the matriarch, she's called—know how to survive in all sorts of conditions that a family group of elephants makes it. So when they lose the adults they lose the culture of being elephants, and we're now seeing groups of babies and juveniles and teen-agers huddled together in confused little lumps, just wandering around, not knowing what to do to take care of themselves.”

Elephants inhabit about 30 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Both male and female African elephants have tusks.

Two-thirds of the 800 tons of ivory that annually leaves Africa ends up in Japan, where it is used for both practical and ornamental purposes, McMeekin says. Japanese traders

also export ivory to other countries to be carved. About one-third of the world's trade in carved ivory products is imported into the U.S.

Most of these ivory imports comply with federal laws, McMeekin says. “However, experts have determined that 80 percent of the ivory in the world market—including 80 percent of that in the U.S.—is actually illegal ivory at its source. The elephant was killed illegally...hacked to pieces for its ivory, and it had nothing to do with legal export.

“One of the common myths is that Africans themselves are getting rich from the sale of ivory and the slaughter of elephants, and that is most definitely not so,” McMeekin adds. “Africa is being robbed of its ivory and its elephants.”

Proposals now in congressional committees would restrict or ban ivory imports into the U.S. But such proposals might not be enacted quickly, so the African Wildlife Foundation is asking consumers to voluntarily stop buying ivory to lower its demand. “We hope the idea of simply not buying ivory will spread rapidly,” McMeekin says.

The African Wildlife Foundation is a non-profit group organized in 1961 when it helped train wildlife and resource managers for newly independent African nations. The foundation does not receive direct assistance from African nations and operates on contributions from individuals and other foundations. For more information, write or call the African Wildlife Foundation, 1717 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 602, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 265-8394.

—Richard Hoops



## Old wrong righted for "prisoners" of war—almost

Last month President Reagan signed legislation vindicating Japanese-Americans wronged by the U.S. government 46 years ago. In signing the bill, he declared that evacuating 120,000 Japanese-Americans from the West Coast and interning them in relocation camps during World War II had been a mistake. He hoped the bill, which authorizes personal apologies and cash reparations to each of the surviving wartime internees, would "right a grave wrong."

It was a great victory for Japanese-American groups, especially the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), which has lobbied for reparations and redress since the early '70s. The bill authorizes a total of \$125 billion in payments to be spread over a 10-year period with a tax-free \$20,000 for each of the approximately 60,000 surviving internees. Moreover, the legislation acknowledges the "grave injustice" of the wartime evacuation and offers individual apologies to the internees for violations of their civil liberties and constitutional rights.

For most internees, the legislation represents the end of a long battle and a half-century of fear, shame and indignation. "We knew from the

beginning that they couldn't do this to us," said Patrick Okura, a Los Angeles city employee in 1942 who was interned with 19,000 others at the Santa Anita racetrack in Southern California. "Nobody had accused us of anything except that we happened to be of Japanese ancestry."

Okura himself, however, was accused in the early '40s by a nationally syndicated columnist of being a Japanese spy posing as an Irishman (the columnist spelled Okura's name "O'kura"). "I've been vindicated," he said. "A great load has been lifted." Okura will accept the money and establish a foundation for Asian-Americans in the mental health field. "It has taken a long time," he said, "but if you can live long enough and are tenacious enough, in America justice will prevail."

But for some, justice will not have fully prevailed until a precedent exists ensuring that such injustice cannot legally happen again. "Congress says this [legislation] would be a deterrent," says Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga, an amateur archivist and redress activist, "but we need more than a deterrent."

A class-action suit filed in March 1983 charges that the government's "military necessity" rationale for the internments was invalid and that evidence that the evacuation order was prompted by racial prejudice and war hysteria was suppressed in Supreme Court cases in the '40s. The

suit seeks a judicial declaration that the internments were illegal.

Herzig-Yoshinaga uncovered the key evidence in the case during her research into the files of the War Relocation Authority and the War Department at the National Archives. The government has long argued that military necessity justified the evacuations, but that argument was contradicted in a draft version of the War Department's *Final Report* on the evacuations. The commanding general of the Western Defense Command at the time of the internments, Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt, admitted the patriotism of many evacuees and the difficulty of separating the "sheep from the goats."

Because the reparations legislation includes a provision that in accepting the cash payment internees must give up any legal claims pending against the government, Herzig-Yoshinaga and other activists will not accept the cash reparation until the suit, which is on appeal, has been settled.

"The legal precedent [for this evacuation and internment] should be abolished," says Herzig-Yoshinaga. "In the future the government would be prohibited from excluding or incarcerating any group of persons based on race without legal hearings and rights.... President Reagan says this closes the chapter, but I don't think it does. We have one more step to go." —Alisa Joyce

## Salvadoran judo champ wrestles with death squads

SAN SALVADOR—It was a mixed Olympic send-off for Salvadoran judo champion Fredy Torres. One day he met with the president, the next he narrowly escaped abduction.

Twenty-six-year-old Torres, who mixes his world-class judo with the much more dangerous sport of Salvadoran union activism, was on his way to work out when heavily armed men jumped out of two vehicles and tried to throw him to the ground. He wrestled himself free and started screaming to attract attention.

"They said, 'This time we're going to kill you. We're not taking you in,'" says Torres' younger brother Carlos. Fredy's brother thinks his yelling saved his life. "The police didn't know what to do and they left."

The next day a shaken Fredy Torres left for Seoul, Korea, with the other members of the six-person Salvadoran Olympic team.

Like many from San Salvador's poor barrios, Fredy Torres grew up quickly. He started working to help support his family at the same age he began practicing judo—nine. At 14 he married his 12-year-old sweetheart, Rosa Margarita, and at 17 he became a father. He was juggling work, judo and school when he won the Central American championship and competed at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles and at the Pan American Games in Indianapolis last year.

Despite the government repres-

sion in the early '80s that left thousands of Salvadoran union activists dead, in 1983 Torres joined the union for practical reasons. He was making \$70 a month and his family was expecting again. "Working with the union was the only way to be able to survive."

Union activism is a rough sport in El Salvador and Torres' judo came in handy. "My sport is defense, and in a clash I was useful," says Torres. The union struck successfully in 1984 and 1985. Little by little Torres became more conscious. By 1987, the year of a bitter and unsuccessful strike, Torres was a full-time union staffer.

When Torres left for the Indianapolis games, some advised him not to return. "They said I was being watched and might be killed," says Torres. "They were trying to scare me into not returning so they could weaken the union."

"They accuse us of being with the guerrillas [who are fighting the U.S.-backed government]," says Torres. "But what motivates us is the reality of our lives, not the guerrillas. We have to make demands so we can survive. If the left also makes similar demands, that's not our fault."

The night of April 28, after teaching a judo class, Torres was kidnapped by 10 heavily armed men who waited in the parking lot. Torres was handcuffed, blindfolded and whisked off in one of the cars. While one man beat him with the pistol butt, others argued over who would get to kill him. Torres ended up at the Treasury Police, where he under-

went round-the-clock interrogation.

"They wanted me to say that the union was working with the guerrillas," says Torres. "Then they threatened to kill my entire family. I was worried for my family, but I wasn't going to let them destroy the union and all the families that depend on it."

"I told them to do what they were going to do. It would be more shameful for my family to see me denouncing the union on a video than to die," says Torres. "My sports had prepared me. I didn't feel any fear. I knew they could kill me but I felt prepared."

Meanwhile, his students had seen him abducted and had written down the car's license number. The union called a press conference that night, and the news of his kidnapping by the police was broadcast on radio and television.

Three days later Torres was released by the Treasury Police with one final message: continue and we will kill you. "I think they're capable of it. They've killed and disappeared many union leaders. If they can kill an archbishop they can easily kill me."

Torres is now in Korea, competing in judo. While some Olympic athletes merely worry about their performance and possible endorsement contracts, Fredy Torres has other problems on his mind. "My role in Korea is as an athlete, but I'm also political because that's my reality, the reality of the workers."

—Chris Norton

**"The White House outside the White House":** Since the NSC, the CIA and their S/LPD brainchild were forbidden by law to run covert domestic operations, they channelled their propaganda efforts through private-sector consultants and citizen groups. According to the Foreign Affairs Committee report, these consultants and groups (which in the intelligence business might be described as CIA assets) "raised money for contra weapons, lobbied the Congress, ran sophisticated media campaigns in targeted congressional districts and worked with S/LPD to influence American public opinion through manipulation of the American press." Much of S/LPD's propagandizing was done through International Business Communications (IBC), a public-relations firm owned by Richard Miller, the former director of public affairs at AID, and by Francis Gomez, the former director of Foreign Press Centers for the USIA. Between February 1984 and September 1986 IBC received contracts from the State Department totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. According to the Office of Inspector General, none of these payments followed the federal guidelines governing contractual procedures. In mid-1984 IBC's Miller and Gomez hooked up with the NSC's Oliver North, and the three men began a cooperative effort to support the contra cause. Later, in spring 1985, White House Deputy Political Director John Roberts introduced Miller and Gomez to Carl "Spitz" Channell. According to the Foreign Affairs Committee report, "Roberts was so confident in [sic] IBC's connections to the administration that he described it as the 'White House outside the White House.'" With the help of IBC and Oliver North, Channell raised \$10 million for the contras. About \$2 million was used to fund congressional lobbying, pro-contra advertising campaigns and grass-roots support for contra aid. About \$3.7 million went to the contras. Some \$500,000 was distributed by North to various contra-involved parties. The rest was kept by Miller and Channell for salaries and expenses.

Continued next week



**Flotilla of protest:** Environmentalists and sportfishermen in hundreds of boats took to the sea (OK, New York Harbor) the other week to protest the ocean dumping of sewage sludge by New York and New Jersey.

## Fish bait

On September 15 Hamilton Fish III (really the V) was decisively beaten in the primary race for the congressional seat of Westchester County, N.Y., by Nita Lowey, a Mario Cuomo protege running with heavy feminist support (see *In These Times*, September 7). Daniel Lazare reports from New York that Lowey attacked Fish, the former publisher of *The Nation* and the son of one congressman and grandson of another, for having served as president of the exclusive all-male Fly Club during his undergraduate years at Harvard. Dennis Mehiel, a wealthy manufacturer who came in third, savaged Fish for his 10-year association with America's leading left-liberal magazine. The issue Mehiel focused on was Israel. In a last-minute publicity blitz, he called Fish a radical, described him as the man who hired anti-Zionist columnist Alexander Cockburn and quoted from Gore Vidal's famous 1986 *Nation* article, "The Empire Lovers Strike Back" which referred to neo-conservatives Midge Decter and Norman Podhoretz as Israeli fifth columnists. Three days before the primary, Martin Peretz, publisher of the *New Republic* and a neo-conservative spokesman, weighed in with a letter to local newspapers. He contended, "Ever since Fish took over *The Nation*, it has been embarked on a campaign to discredit Israel and to legitimize and prettify its enemies." Although Fish took pains to stake out a hard-line, pro-Israeli position in this heavily Jewish district, the onslaught of negative publicity proved too much. Earlier polls had shown him with a comfortable lead, but campaign workers believe he lost several thousand votes in the final 10 days as the previously tame contest turned nasty. Lowey finished with 44 percent of the vote, Fish with 36 percent and Mehiel with 20 percent.



By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON, D.C.

**S**INCE EARLY AUGUST, CHARGES OF ANTI-Semitism have stalked Vice President George Bush's presidential campaign. Bush has obtained resignations from the officials charged with anti-Semitism, but the issue continues to fester. This is partly because even in accepting the resignations, Bush and his staff refused to

## Bush's teflon on anti-Semitic links



## CAMPAIGN 88

acknowledge that the officials did anything wrong.

The first publication to air charges of anti-Semitism against Bush officials was the 20,000-circulation *Washington Jewish Week*. Reporter Larry Cohler recounted how top members of Bush's 88-member American Nationalities Coalition were reputed anti-Semites and fascists. The coalition, announced by Bush at an August 2 press conference, was supposed to garner ethnic support for the November election.

Co-chairman Jerome Brentar, a Cleveland travel agent, was the leading defender of John Demjanjuk, who was deported to Israel after a court ruled that he had committed atrocities as a Nazi death camp guard. Brentar has also been active with a Torrance, Calif., institute dedicated to denying the existence of the Holocaust. And he admitted that after World War II he facilitated the entry of former Nazi SS members into the U.S.

The coalition's honorary chairman, Roma-

nian Orthodox priest Florian Galdau, has been fingered both by Nazi hunters like Simon Wiesenthal and conservative Romanian emigres as a leading member of the Iron Guard, a secret pro-Nazi organization\* of Romanian exiles. Coalition Vice-chairman Philip Guarino was an associate of fascist Licio Gelli and a reputed member of P-2, a secret organization that aimed to create a

right-wing dictatorship in Italy.

Prominent coalition member Laszlo Pazstor served as official in Hungary's pro-Nazi wartime government. And two other coalition leaders, honorary chairmen Ignatius Bilinski and Bhodan Fedorak, were outspoken opponents of the Office of Special Investigations (OSI), founded by the Carter administration to ferret out living Nazi war crimi-

nals in the U.S.

**Honorable discharges:** On September 10, two days after the *Washington Jewish Week* story broke, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that another coalition leader, Radi Slavoff, the national co-chairman of the Bulgarian-Americans for Bush, was a member of the pro-Nazi Bulgarian National Front. In 1983 Slavoff had also arranged a dinner in

## Just say nothing: media ignores Bush campaign's ties to drug countries

Dan Quayle's recent admission that he was unaware that Vice President Bush is supervising the Reagan administration's "war on drugs" may not be so surprising after all. Top aides to both Quayle and Bush have ties to governments that play key roles in international drug trafficking. One might excuse the senator for not knowing which side of the "war" he's on, let alone who's in charge.

But while Bush's affiliation to those with alleged neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic pasts has made headlines nationwide, his campaign's links to governments involved in drug trafficking have gained scant media attention.

The most important of these links involves Bush campaign manager Lee Atwater, an associate of a consulting firm that in 1984 received \$800,000 from the government of the Bahamas. Several top Bahamian officials have already been indicted on drug charges, and Congress is investigating allegations that the Colombian drug cartel's grip on the Bahamian government reached all the way to Prime Minister Lynden Oscar Findling (see *In These Times*, March 30).

The senior partners in Atwater's consulting firm, Black, Manafort and Stone, have all had prominent roles in the Bush campaign. Charles Black was Bush's liaison to the Republican Party platform

committee, Paul Manafort helps schedule Bush's campaign and Roger Stone is a political adviser.

The Bush campaign claims that the firm was hired by the Bahamian government to lobby for more help from the U.S. to fight drug trafficking in the Bahamas. But that's not what the firm suggested in a 23-page memo offering its services.

Instead, it promises that the firms' partners and associates could use their "personal relationships" with the Reagan administration to set up a "back-channel relationship" that could replace the "negatively charged atmosphere" surrounding the Bahamas with "impressions of a positive nature."

While the Black, Manafort and Stone memo does not directly address the drug issue, it notes that the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Treasury Department can be viewed as "active critics" of the Bahamian government and accuses those agencies of using "propaganda to achieve their own self-interests."

Bush's public denunciations of Gen. Manuel Noriega's Panamanian government for its role in drug trafficking also seem shrill, in light of a British TV report that the vice president knew of Noriega's drug role as early as 1983. Furthermore, the Bush campaign assigned Quayle a campaign manager with strong links to

Panama's leadership. Stuart Spencer, who directs Quayle's campaign, recently worked on his consulting firm's \$350,000 contract with Panama. The firm, according to Allan Nairn writing in the September 26 *New Republic*, fought charges that Noriega was involved in assassination and drug smuggling.

Nairn reported that the contract, which ran for a year in 1985 and 1986, was cancelled because Panama ran out of money: Spencer's firm was trying to extend the contract, despite mounting evidence of Noriega's drug ties. Spencer also belonged to another firm that had a \$350,000 contract with the government of South Africa.

Michael Dukakis has tried to make an issue out of the Bush-Quayle campaign's ties, declaring on September 10, "The American people have a right to know that the back door of the White House will not be the front door for paid agents of foreign governments.... In the Dukakis White House, the staff will pledge allegiance to only one flag: Old Glory."

But the media, after first-day stories that were given little prominence, has generally ignored the issues. "It's almost like Bush has become the Teflon candidate," says Martin Lee, editor of *Extra!*, a leftist media-watch newsletter. The Bush campaign, in fact, has often kept jour-



Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega

nalists on the defensive—as with the well-orchestrated backlash over the media's investigation of Quayle's military and academic records.

Other observers wonder if the advisers' ties would affect many votes even if they were publicized. "In a sense the press has accommodated itself to the seeming indifference the American public has for behavior that in other years of our history would be classified as scandalous," says Larry Birns of the liberal Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

The Bahamas-Panama links may be harbingers of more than just four more years of sleaze, however. In 1980 Reagan campaign adviser Michael Deaver's public relations firm worked for the military governments of both Argentina and Guatemala, a connection that foreshadowed the Reagan administration's retreat from human rights issues. With narcotics empires increasingly dominating Third World governments, will Bush be as accommodating to drug traffickers as Reagan was to dictators?

—Jim Naureckas



Washington to honor Austin App, a Philadelphia professor who denied that the Holocaust ever happened.

The next day the *Washington Post* revealed that Frederic V. Malek, who had managed the Republican convention in New Orleans and had become deputy director of the Republican National Committee, had played a key role in a Nixon administration purge of Jewish officials who worked in the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Bush's response to the stories was pure damage control. He fired Brentar, citing Brentar's link to Demjanjuk, and asked for the resignation of Malek and the six officials fingered by *Washington Jewish Week* and the *Inquirer*. But at the same time Bush official Mark Goodin called the newspaper's charges against the ethnic coalition leaders "politically motivated garbage," and Bush himself in a September 12 press conference called Malek "an honorable man without a trace of bigotry in his makeup."

Bush may have to offer more honorable discharges. In a report published by the Cambridge-based Political Research Associates, Russ Bellant shows that the Republican Heritage Groups Council, an official body of the Republican Party, remains a hotbed of

Nazism, anti-Semitism and fascism. Four of the men forced to resign—Galdau, Pazstor, Guarino and Slavoff—remain part of the GOP organization. Pazstor was its founder and Slavoff is its current executive director.

Others suspected of anti-Semitism are also members of the Council. For instance, Nicolas Nazarenko, a prominent Cossack Republican, served in World War II as a member of the Cossack's SS unit. According to Bellant, who interviewed Nazarenko, the former Cossack continues to regard Jews as "ideological enemies" and to deny that Germany gassed Jews in concentration camps. "Jews didn't die from gas chambers," he told Bellant. "Those mountains of bones are from people who starved to death or died from disease."

Bush drew his own ethnic coalition (in which Jews and blacks are not "ethnic groups") from the leadership of Heritage Groups Council. The council's leadership, as Bellant shows, was clearly drawn from the ranks of Nazi and fascist sympathizers who emigrated to the U.S. after World War II and who became the shock troops for right-wing anti-communism.

**Ancient history:** But it remains unclear how much damage these revelations will do

to Bush. His apparent duplicity—accepting the resignations of the officials while denying that they had done anything wrong—angered some Jewish leaders. "These statements [by Bush] are obviously an attempt

## Some Jewish leaders and organizations virtually ignored charges that George Bush's campaign harbored officials with anti-Semitic histories.

to mollify both the Jewish community and the extremists in his own ranks," said Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. But other Jewish leaders appear curiously blasé about both the revelations and Bush's response to them.

Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, told the *New York Times* that the charges against Malek were "ancient history." Foxman thought that Malek should not have been forced to resign. About Malek's participation in the anti-Jewish purge, Foxman said, "I think it is sufficiently clear that he did not do it with animus, bigotry or prejudice in his heart or mind."

Other Jewish organizations virtually ignored the charges. In its September 19 newsletter, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) made only passing reference to the revelations, noting Bush's pledge to maintain OSI's budget.

These reactions bear out the extent to which Jewish organizations have been compromised by their proximity to power. "Instead of defending our principles, we defend our access," one Jewish leader commented privately. AIPAC's reaction also fits in with its response to Bush's selection of Indiana Sen. J. Danforth Quayle as his running mate. In the past, AIPAC had singlemindedly gone about trying to defeat senators like Illinois' Charles Percy or Rhode Island's John Chafee who had voted for Arab arms sales. But the organization welcomed Bush's choice of Quayle, in spite of the senator's consistent support for arms sales to Arab countries.

There was, however, another factor involved in Jewish leaders' diffident response. In exonerating Malek, Foxman was implicitly comparing him with Rev. Jesse Jackson. Foxman told *Washington Jewish Week*, "If we are to forgive Jackson for 'poisonous weed' and 'Hymietown,' is it right to forgive on one side, but not on the other?"

This sentiment was echoed in the *New Republic*. The magazine, usually a watchdog for anti-Semitism, dismissed as "antique and anemic" the anti-Semitism practiced by the emigres and Malek. In an October 3 editorial the magazine warned, "The revelations [about Bush] have deflected attention from the truly salient anti-Semitism in American politics." It identified this "far more virulent" anti-Semitism with the "left wing of the Democratic Party" and with "elements of the Jackson campaign" and "increasingly well-organized Arab activists."

*Washington Jewish Week's* Cohler summed up the response of these Jews. "They see these guys [like Brentar and Malek] as yesterday's danger. They see anti-Semitism on the left as the present danger." □

## You can judge a man by the company he keeps

DETROIT—Last July 20 Vice President George Bush addressed a suburban Detroit meeting of emigres. About 500 mostly older Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Croats, Lithuanians and other Eastern Europeans gathered to hear what was promised to be a hardline foreign policy speech geared to the militant Cold War psychology of the audience.

Little American flags, part of the standard Bush campaign fare, were distributed by a Republican Party staffer. It was a hype not well suited to the European ultra-nationalists. They had their own flags to display.

Bush was introduced by Bohdan Fedorak, head of the Ukrainian Cultural Center hall where the dinner was held. It was sponsored by the Detroit Captive Nations Committee and the Antiboldshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN).

Fedorak, who is a leader of both groups, concluded his welcome to Bush with an attack on the Office of Special Investigations (OSI), the Justice Department unit charged with investigating Nazi war criminals who illegally entered the U.S. after World War II.

As Fedorak raised the subject of OSI, Bush acknowledged Fedorak's views with a nod and applauded at the end of his anti-OSI remarks.

Since its inception the OSI has primarily investigated Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians and others who assisted the German occupation forces on the Eastern Front in World War II. The Nazis formed military, police and Nazi political units in the occupied areas. These units formed a multinational alliance in 1943 that became the ABN. It is still active today in exile.

Fedorak is a leader of a member group of the ABN, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), formed in alliance with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. The OUN formed military units that aided the German massacre of Poles and Jews in the Ukraine. It led a short-lived, pro-Nazi regime in 1941 headed by Yaroslav Stetsko, who aided the Nazis until the end

of the war.

Several of Fedorak's co-nationalists and at least one OUN leader now residing in the U.S. have been charged with war crimes. Thus Fedorak's anti-OSI comments can be seen as an effort to stop such prosecutions.

The OUN and ABN have worked with Bush for several years. In 1983 wartime Nazi ally and OUN leader Yaroslav Stetsko was a guest of President Ronald Reagan and Bush for a Captive Nations event at the White House. The OUN and ABN, headquartered in Munich, pledged to support the 1984 Reagan-Bush ticket.

In turn, the OUN seeks support from the U.S. government for a return to power in the Ukraine. It still maintains a national socialist ideology and alliances. The chief vehicle for OUN's international intrigues is the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), which is composed of the ABN, Latin American death squad leaders, the Moonies, various racist and anti-Semitic groups and the dictatorships of Taiwan and Korea. Fedorak is an OUN representative to WACL.

Sitting on the dais several seats from Bush at the Detroit gathering was Dr. Joseph Sayze, who heads a veterans group composed primarily of military collaborators of the Nazi occupation in Byelorussia. Working under the Nazi SS, Byelorussian military units massacred Jews during the war. The SS general who headed these operations, Franz Kuschel, served as head of the veterans group, the Byelorussian American Veterans Association, before Sayze. According to a 1948 declassified U.S. intelligence report, the veterans group was formed by Nazi collaborators who fled to Germany after the war. Sayze said in a recent interview that he was a training officer to military units in Byelorussia during the war.

Also on the dais was Katherine Chumachenko, the White House director for ethnic liaison. Prior to her current job, Chumachenko was executive director of the National Captive Nations Committee.

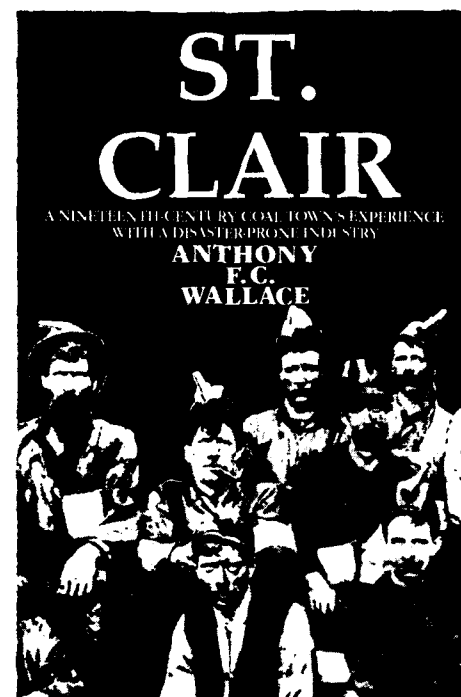
—Russ Bellant

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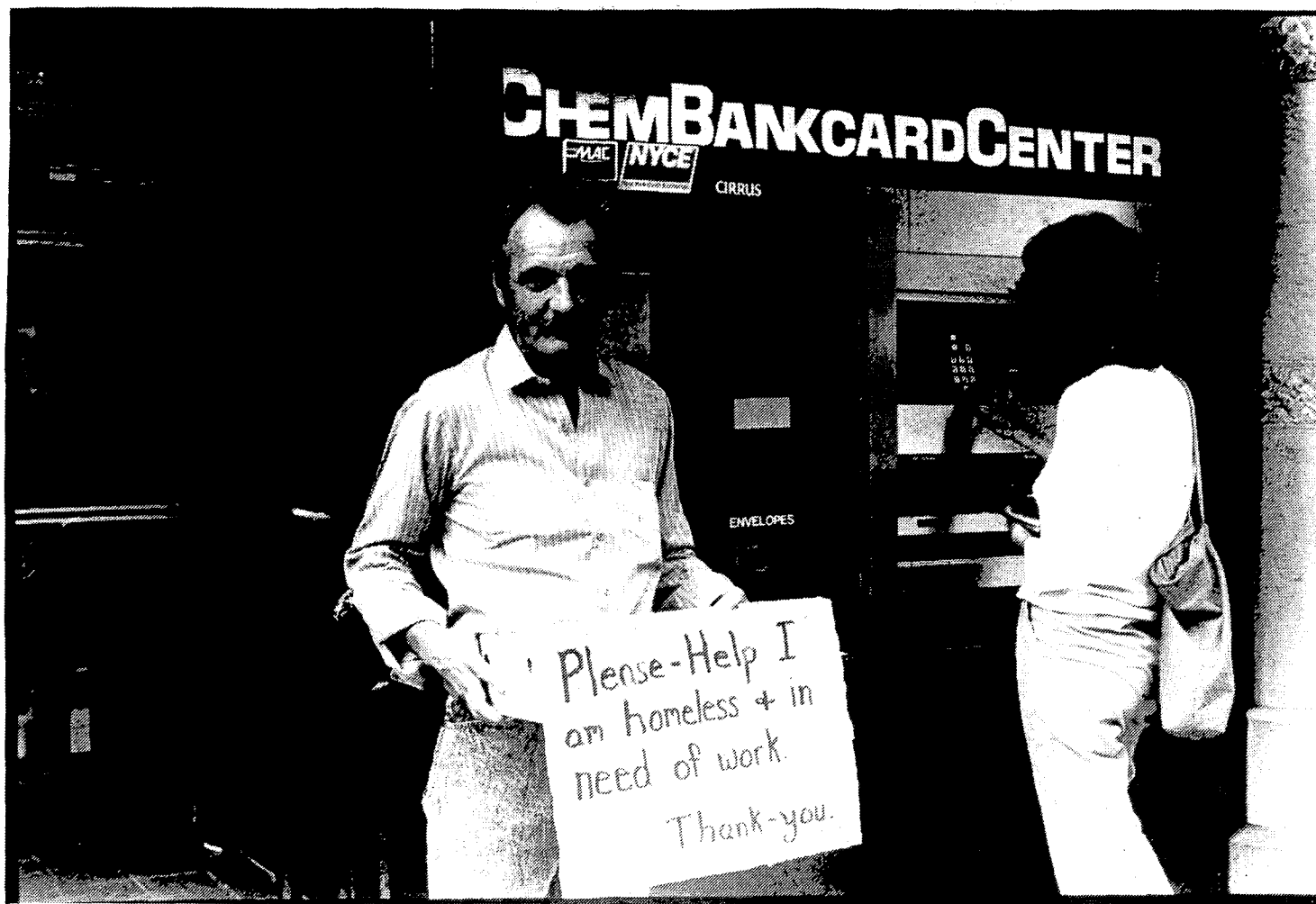


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A homeless man in New York: experts estimate that 5 to 15 percent of the city's homeless are from the middle class.

# The tragedy of downward mobility: homelessness hits the middle class

By Robert Polner  
and Paul Schwartzman

IT WAS A DRIVE FRANK POWELL (A PSEUDONYM) usually took to relax: 15 minutes down breezy Ocean Parkway toward the shore and an open sky.

But this was an anxious drive, a miserable drive. He was cruising aimlessly on this raw February night. His wife, Debbie, was sitting stiffly beside him, stroking the blonde head of their sobbing four-year-old, Caroline. They talked nervously, trying, as Frank says, "to look on the bright side of life, or whatever was left of it." Suitcases and color television stuffed into the back of their Plymouth, the Powells, both 30, cruised for hours around Long Beach, Long Island, to postpone the inevitable—their first night in a homeless shelter.

They'd grown up among the pampered lawns and two-car garages of Valley Stream, Long Island, and had been married for seven years; they were middle class. Yet all it took was a slip on a stairway to drop them into the ranks of the homeless—the ranks, they'd always believed, of the lazy, the drunk, the drug-addicted and those who were born poor.

**The big squeeze:** In August 1986 Frank stumbled off the stoop of their rented house in Long Beach, a 10-foot fall that knocked him unconscious and damaged nerve endings in his neck and shoulder. He developed a buzz in his right ear. He was in constant pain. His job as a supervisor in a waste treatment plant required him to move heavy equipment, and that was simply impossible. He was, as his doctor confirmed, in too much pain to work.

That October Frank left the company after

his boss said he had no desk job to offer. Frank didn't have much saved (the job paid \$18,700 a year), and there were virtually no disability benefits. He also missed a crucial deadline: papers show he didn't furnish the state's disability review board proof of injury within 30 days of the accident. And so in February 1987 the board mailed him a notice that he was eligible for a total of \$725, less than half of what he would have received if he had filed promptly.

Now the squeeze was on. Debbie's \$17,680 salary as a buyer for an electronics company

## POVERTY

was not going to cover their relatively low \$650 monthly rent, the \$430 a month for food and utilities and the \$1,000 they owed the auto mechanic.

"We freaked out when we realized we couldn't do anything and had nowhere to go," says Frank, who studied sound engineering at the Center for Media Arts in Manhattan for two years.

They left their German shepherd Raider with a friend and put their furniture in storage. After eight mind-numbing hours in a welfare office filling out trails of papers and answering questions, they were sent to the shelter run by the Hospitality Inn, a non-profit group that helps the homeless and the hungry on Long Island.

But they were lucky: reality on Long Island is better for the homeless than reality in New York City. The Powells expected a gymnasium with cots and crack dealers; they got two bedrooms in a good-sized house with a large dining room. They walked in warily: "I expected these people to be really homeless types—no jobs, on welfare, taking drugs. But

some were very nice and even had jobs," Frank says.

What bothered them as much as their lack of a home was the way the world would judge them: they had never accepted charity before. Frank still fears that prospective employers won't hire him if they knew he was homeless. "It was unsettling to think we'd have a label on us as people who don't want to work, who are down on their luck," Frank says. "I know my fall was an accident, but this was my family and I was responsible for them. I didn't want anyone to think that I couldn't provide."

They got out in six weeks. The middle-class homeless, unlike many of the chronically poor who fill the country's shelters in much greater numbers, usually do. They landed another \$650 rental, the cheapest they could find, a one-bedroom near Jones Beach. Welfare paid their moving expenses, their first month's rent and the security deposit. Still seeing a physical therapist more than a year after his fall, Frank is well enough to paint house interiors and, when the calls are coming, to make \$200 a week off the books.

Debbie is the major breadwinner. She has had a second child. Frank is haunted with anxiety. "Sure, I'm scared," he says. He worries that her company could go under. "What if something goes wrong again—now we have two little mouths to feed."

**The new homeless:** As homelessness continues to spread like an infection (the U.S. Conference of Mayors estimates that demand for shelter rose by 21 percent in 1986) it's no longer affecting just the poor and lower-middle-class. The street is not as far away as it used to be for a new type of homeless victim—middle-class people, like the

Powells.

"Homelessness is radiating right up the economic ladder," says Professor Michael Fabricant of Hunter College's Graduate School of Social Work. "We're finding that more and more people are falling out of the housing market."

While the country's homeless system is still largely a refuge for the poor minorities with little education or opportunity, it's increasingly being called upon as a safety net for refugees from the middle class.

New York, a city synonymous with astronomical rents, is where the middle-class homeless are the most numerous and where they are being detected by a network of anti-poverty coalitions. In the past, these groups have been the first to identify new dimensions of homelessness.

The groups help make New York a barometer of the problem for the country. Moreover, the processes that spread homelessness are accelerated in New York. In just 10 years, for instance, more than 100,000 units of cheap, single-room occupancy housing virtually vanished, thanks to tax laws stewarded by Mayor Edward Koch. They cleared the way for real-estate developers to convert one of the last refuges for struggling people into luxury housing.

During the Koch years, gentrification has gained momentum, transforming ethnic enclaves into upscale neighborhoods characterized by stores like The Gap and David's Cookies, co-ops and condominiums and sky-high rents; \$1,200 a month for a one-bedroom apartment is not unusual.

In Indiana, says Columbia University urbanologist Robert Baily, a working person driven out by high rents can move to a second- or third-ring suburb, five or 10 miles outside the city. But in New York, that's impossible. Ten miles from Manhattan lies affluent suburbia and former factory towns that have been infiltrated by young, single professionals.

Contributing to New York's critical shortage of affordable housing—and middle-class homelessness—is a mayor who has also failed to revive the city's inventory of abandoned housing. In a city swelling with destitute people, hundreds of boarded-up buildings testify to the Koch administration's unwillingness or inability to help the non-rich (see *In These Times*, September 7).

Koch's policies mirror President Reagan's: federal funding for subsidized low-income housing has dried up under Reagan. The result is years-long waiting lists and the doubling and tripling up of families at the puzzle-box housing projects that tower over poor, crack-menaced neighborhoods.

The rich have gotten richer, the poor more numerous and those in the middle have lost ground. Economists Bennett Harrison, Chris Tilly and Barry Bluestone say that since 1978, for the first time since World War II, economic inequality among Americans has widened: a profound shift toward a two-tiered society. Their research suggests that the middle class is shrinking, perhaps even disappearing (see *In These Times*, September 14).

According to Congress' Joint Economic Committee, the American pie looks like this: the share of the national income received by the wealthiest 40 percent of the families had risen to 67.3 percent, while the poorest 40 percent received just 15.7 percent, the smallest share since 1947. The share of the middle 20 percent declined to 17 percent.

The picture suggests downward mobility. Worse, those who lack the key option their



parents had (moving to a less expensive apartment when the going gets tough) can fall all the way to the bottom—a homeless shelter.

**There's no place like...no place:** Interviews *In These Times* conducted with 20 middle-class homeless people in New York, New Jersey and Long Island make that clear. They'd all earned from \$18,000 to \$100,000 a year before their humiliating sojourns—some for weeks, some for years—in shelters. They all were homeless primarily because of the scarcity of moderately priced rentals; in the New York area, that means apartments going for \$300 to \$600 a month, as there is practically none cheaper. "People just can't meet the rent anymore," says Hunter College's Fabricant.

Shelter directors and homeless advocates estimate that the middle class—almost unheard of in shelters five years ago—now represents 5 to 15 percent of the homeless in New York City; the percentage is even higher, they say, in suburban areas.

That's partly because middle-class New Yorkers are just two or three paychecks ahead of eviction. An everyday tragedy—the loss of a spouse or a long illness—can bring on the unthinkable, particularly if someone is alone and depressed. "There are middle-class people, not in the upscale high-rises on the avenues but on the side streets, who hold on by their fingernails," said Upper East Side Assemblyman Alexander Grannis, chairman of the New York State Assembly housing committee. "If their Social Security check doesn't come through or if they're laid up for a couple of weeks and the landlord moves to evict them, they're finished."

Those who are ashamed and alone—and many middle-class people facing homelessness are shunned by their families—are especially vulnerable to sinking to life in a shelter. If they're lucky enough to have friends who can take in a whole family, they become some of the 103,000 or more "couch people" in New York living in someone else's living room.

**Getting burned:** That's what happened to Ralph Sofio, 46, a \$27,000-a-year chauffeur for Warner Communications. He lived with his wife Ronnie, 31, a physical therapist, in a comfortable, \$304-a-month studio apartment at 349 W. 65th Street. It had been his before their marriage. They were living modestly, saving toward the purchase of a larger apartment in the city; they were looking forward to putting their two-year-old, Lea, through college.

On Feb. 1, 1987, fire disrupted that dream. "It was terrifying; we could have been killed," says Ralph, who stood in the freezing pre-dawn cold and helplessly watched as their five-story walkup burned.

The Sofios would not be able to go home again for 11 months. Fortunately, they had Ralph's best friend, Lea's godfather, to turn to. Not everyone is so lucky, and the Sofios know it.

"Thank God for Richard or we would have ended up in the shelters. And who knows if they would have made us split up as a family," says Ralph. "We looked for an apartment in Long Island City, but the best we could find was a deteriorated one-bedroom for \$700. And we really didn't want to move. If we signed another lease, we'd have lost our place when they finally fixed it up. It was our home, close to my job, and Ronnie and I felt the landlord was legally and morally obligated to make the repairs. Anyway, how can a family with our income afford to walk away from a rent-stabilized apartment?"

They lived in the tiny room their friend used as an office in his one-bedroom flat. Ronnie cooked dinners, kept house and awkwardly tried to prevent their squabbles and anxiety from intruding on their host's private life. There was good will all around, but also an unbearable sense of restriction, of constraint.

Last December 12, the Sofios went home. Ronnie, who led the tenants' legal battle with phone calls, letters and housing court appearances, used to be judgmental about the rumpled people she'd see panhandling on the streets. "Now," she says, "I pray for them and pray nothing like this ever happens to us again."

**The trickle-up theory:** Like the Sofios, the middle-class homeless often get help climbing back to a normal life, while their poorer counterparts struggle against welfare's red tape and inadequacy: soup kitchens that run out of soup prematurely, squalid welfare hotels lacking in day care, poorly staffed job-training centers. For the poor, the presence of middle-class people in shelters is disturbing: it suggests poverty is trickling up. If people better off than themselves can't make it, how can they?

The middle-class victims also have a head start on the road back to stability because they typically land in a friend's spare room or a small, well-run shelter in their neighborhoods; they are often steered clear of the city's barracks-style armories and dilapidated welfare hotels by empathetic (middle-class) case workers and clergymen. They have skills and education to fall back on. They may have connections to jobs and apartments.

No one has surveyed the income levels of homeless shelter residents, probably because they are such a transient lot. They are impossible to count. Still, in New York, the Westchester County Department of Human Services polled 467 homeless singles last summer and discovered that 35 percent had high school diplomas, 5.5 percent completed two years of college and 2.8 percent finished graduate school. Joel Levy, an assistant housing commissioner, says the numbers suggest that many homeless people were once better off than anyone thought.

Peter Smith, executive director of the Partnership for the Homeless, a coalition of civic groups, churches and synagogues that run 128 volunteer shelters in New York, says he first detected a rise in the number of middle-class homeless after the recession in 1983; that's when the middle class began increasing from 3 percent to the current 9 per-

cent of the displaced, he estimates.

Robert Hayes, who directs the National Coalition for the Homeless, says the middle class are still a small percent of the homeless nationwide, but their numbers are swelling because of the lack of affordable housing. "As the competition for apartments stiffens, the idiosyncratic tales of middle-class people becoming homeless probably will increase," he says.

Homelessness can't really be separated from meteoric rents and the inability of people to pay them. The Economic Policy Institute in Washington reports that, compared to the previous business cycle of 1973 to 1979, American workers between 1979 and 1987 experienced lower average real earnings, higher unemployment rates and lower median family incomes. The middle-class homeless, it would seem, are reluctant signs of hard times.

Many of them, indeed, are uncomfortable playing the role of victim, and they don't always want help from friends and loved ones. Their desperation flies in the face of the work ethic and the American belief in the ability of individuals to control the circumstances of their lives. Friends and family blame them rather than assume that systemic economic conditions beyond the influence of any individual are responsible.

"This tendency," says Katherine Newman, an anthropologist and author of *Falling from Grace: The Experience of Downward Mobility in the American Middle Class*, "is so pervasive that at times even the victims blame themselves, searching within to find the character flaw that has visited downward mobility upon them."

As Ronnie Sofio says, "It's much easier to give than to take; you just don't know that until it happens to you."

**A horror movie:** It happened to Mary Freitas, who didn't have anyone to rescue her when she was evicted from her Forest Hills apartment in 1984. "I was shocked, ashamed. I no longer felt like I belonged anywhere," says Mary, 52.

On eviction day, Mary says she dropped off her cat and two dogs at an animal shelter and took refuge in a movie theater. She doesn't recall what was playing, but she does remember settling into a red velvet seat, the projection reels cranking. She swallowed sleeping pills until she passed out. She woke up hours later in the hospital, and ended up staying there for two months.

"All my life, I always had too much. No matter what I wanted, I got it. I was completely sure of myself," Mary says. She was

fired shortly before her eviction from a \$19,200-a-year secretarial post at the Broadcast Equipment Corp., a Brazilian company. She says she was let go because her boss wanted to hire Brazilian workers; she had worked there for just a year and had no seniority. Then it became hard to regain her footing. "Once I lost my job I lost confidence in myself and everything. It was a shock not to get what I wanted."

Mary, who now has a small room at Star of the Sea, a non-profit women's shelter in a crack-plagued section of Queens, works as a \$5-an-hour secretary at the animal shelter where her pets live.

Mary is edging toward an independent life, but she shouldn't expect much help. Once the middle-class homeless have been assigned a bed at a shelter, they have to draw on all their mettle and determination to lift themselves back to respectability. No matter how much support they receive from shelter workers, they must struggle against daunting odds and much indifference.

**Bottoming out on Wall Street:** So it is for Steve Goldstein (a pseudonym). Never shy about displaying his wealth when he had it, Goldstein says he's too ashamed to tell his former girlfriend, ex-wife or grown children that since December 28 he has been living at the Trinity Church shelter on Wall Street. His former chauffeur knows only that Goldstein's down on his luck.

"What can I say?" says the driver. "He was on top of the world and I guess life just fell apart for him."

Goldstein, who still wears Gucci sneakers and a \$150 sweater, understands that to get out from down under he must get a job. But pride prevents him from turning to the people who could help—his former garment industry contacts. For five years he earned more than \$100,000 a year as part-owner of a fabric wholesale company.

Goldstein sold his interest in the company after a July 4, 1982, boating accident off Fire Island that left him permanently unable to walk more than five or six blocks without pain shooting through his knees and shoulders. He later lost \$250,000 on the stock market and with it his \$600 East Side studio apartment, the rented limousine and nearly all his savings.

"I never thought this would happen to me, not in a million years did I think so," he says. "I've had more bad things happen to me in a year—from my knees, to an ulcer, to my financial mistakes, to being stuck here—than most people experience in a lifetime."

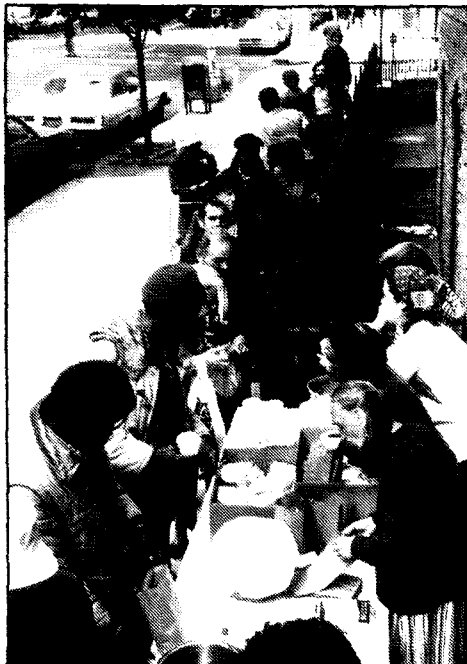
Goldstein is now trying to make it as a cabbie, hoping that with a six-day work week he can take home \$600 a week, enough, perhaps, to get him an apartment again. Anything less would not leave him enough for a security deposit, likely broker's fee and monthly rent, even in the less expensive neighborhoods, he says.

He rubs his hand down his clean-shaven face, revealing a long, pained expression. A homeless man with a hacking cough, ill-fitting shoes and rotted teeth passes on the stairs of the shelter.

"I'm not trying to be a snob to these people," Goldstein says in his nervous staccato. "My God, life is rough on those guys who drink and gamble their lives away. But I honestly feel I'm above them. Everything I got in life I worked for.... I don't ask people what their stories are.... I don't want to know."

"All I know is I'm stagnating, stuck here, and life is passing me by." □

Robert Polner and Paul Schwartzman write for *The Record* of Bergen County, N.J.



**Research shows the rich have gotten richer, the poor have gotten poorer and those in the middle have lost ground. "Homelessness is radiating right up the economic ladder," says one expert. "We're finding that more and more people are falling out of the housing market."**



By Steve Askin

MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

**P**OPE JOHN PAUL II'S UN-CATHOLIC EMBRACE of pacifism was the one clear social message to emerge from a southern Africa tour otherwise cloaked in ambiguity.

It was an unlikely message for the leader of the church that pioneered and developed a theology of "just war." And it came at a time when the heirs to South Africa's long tradition of non-violent resistance are reluctantly edging toward the position that armed struggle is justified because all peaceful means for change have been exhausted.

On other issues, the pope was mercifully bland or obscure from the perspective of his intended hosts, five black-led nations that share the misfortune of bordering on South Africa and are targets of Pretoria's destabilization campaigns: Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique. Their dependence was underscored by South Africa's intervention in a hostage drama that reduced the expected 1 million papal pilgrims in Lesotho to a mere 10,000, and by the unexpected diversion of the papal plane from Lesotho to South Africa, apparently because of bad weather.

Potential confrontations between an anti-communist pope and the region's two socialist governments never materialized. In Zimbabwe—led since independence by Robert Mugabe, a Catholic Marxist—the pope warmly praised the "reconciliation" policy and economic successes of Africa's youngest independent nation. In war-ravaged Mozambique, where bitter church-state conflict has eased significantly in recent years, John Paul II was so cryptic on politically sensitive issues that one senior Western diplomat commented to this reporter, "If you get a revelation from God explaining what the pope meant, please share it with me."

**The sting:** Ironically, fellow Christians with warm ties to the South African Catholic bishops—not any Marxist government—felt most stung by papal remarks.

The pope's very first speech, which he delivered in Zimbabwe on September 10, was interpreted in the South African press as a thinly veiled attack on church leaders like Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev. Allan Boesak, who say that violent resistance is an almost inevitable response to apartheid's greater violence. The pope spoke up just moments after kissing the tarmac in Harare International Airport to formally begin the 39th international tour of his almost 10-year papacy.

He coupled a clear statement of Catholic opposition to apartheid with an appeal for "all those who bear responsibility for the destiny of the peoples of this region, of whatever racial extraction or ideological inspiration, to renounce the use of violence as a method of achieving their ends" (emphasis in text). These words, as an exiled South African Catholic quickly pointed out, had an unfortunate—presumably inadvertent—regional connotation: "renounce the use of violence" is precisely how South African President P.W. Botha phrases his condition for freeing jailed African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

By coincidence, the pope's pre-planned words came immediately after Mugabe, a learned global statesman with deep roots in Catholic social justice tradition, offered a



AFRICA

Pope John Paul II at a stop in Zimbabwe during his southern Africa tour.

## The pope hugs apartheid in his embrace of pacifism

carefully framed theological plea for application of Catholic "just war" doctrine to South African racial injustice. After greeting John Paul II with "all the warmth and joy of the people of Zimbabwe across the races, across tribes and the regions and colorline," Mugabe recounted Zimbabwe's experience in the war that brought majority rule in 1980, but with a cost of at least 30,000 lives.

"It was necessary that in the name of peace, freedom and justice we take up arms," Mugabe said. "We did not do so for the sake of violence, but because we felt we could not achieve justice through a peaceful solution." He stressed that war "was not an end, but a means." And that Zimbabweans turned "their guns to plows" at the moment of independence, offering reconciliation and not retribution to their former oppressors.

This friendly, somewhat ritualized meeting was the only time that the pope publicly engaged in anything like an exchange of views during his nine and a half days in Africa.

**"Passive acceptance":** After his involuntary encounter with apartheid South Africa, John Paul II returned to the non-violence

theme even more forcefully at a youth rally in the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho, a nation completely surrounded and subdued by South Africa. Lesotho's military regime took power in a 1986 coup provoked by a South African economic blockade and today is widely seen as the one black-led government most closely tied to Pretoria.

In that setting, the pope made his most fervently pacifist speech. He said, "You must renounce every form of violence and hatred," even when "some people may say to you that the choice of non-violence is, in the end, a passive acceptance of situations of injustice."

"They may claim that it is cowardly not to use violence against what is wrong or to refuse to defend with violence the oppressed," he continued. "But nothing could be further from the truth.... To choose non-violence means to take a courageous choice in love, a choice which includes the active defense of human rights and a firm commitment to justice and ordered development."

The harshest response to the pope's speech came from a South African Council

of Churches delegation that attended a brief ecumenical meeting with him in Maputo on the trip's last full day. After formally expressing "deep appreciation" for the pope's anti-apartheid stance, members of the SACC delegation sharply challenged him on specifics.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches leader Allan Boesak said the pope's even-handed non-violence evaded a crucial distinction between government action and popular reaction. "South African liberation movements [acted] for 50 years in a non-violent way before they found themselves pushed into a situation where they have no other choice." And today, he said, they are confronted with the banning of peaceful opposition groups, arrests of church leaders, even bombings of church buildings. In Boesak's view, it is "not particularly helpful for the church to say to the people, 'Do not use violence,'" unless it can offer them clear and practical strategies for resisting injustice by non-violent means.

Boesak's delegation also made a strong statement of solidarity with Mozambicans "in their pain, suffering and even death at the hands of the South African regime," and it condemned the Pretoria government as "mainly responsible for the destabilization of the region." The delegation's denunciation of the contra-style Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) as South African tools contrasted sharply with papal ambiguity. Even British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe, whose visit to Mozambique on an aid mission coincided with the pope's, firmly condemned RENAMO atrocities.

**Vague hints:** Yet the pope's near silence on the causes of a war that has killed more than 100,000 Mozambicans was a victory of sorts for the Mozambican government. They feared he might emphatically echo the ultra-conservative local bishops' past calls for negotiations with RENAMO. The Catholic hierarchy stands virtually alone in refusing to denounce RENAMO terrorism. Critics say this reflects the bishops' deep resentment of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO). With independence in 1975 FRELIMO ended the privileged status the bishops enjoyed under Portuguese colonialism.

Instead of lashing out, the pope was especially vague in Mozambique. He merely hinted at urging talks with RENAMO, by backing "efforts of my brother Mozambican bishops" in favor of peace and urging "dialogue for reconciliation which will end the shedding of the blood of brothers."

Yet the government could plausibly claim to be in step with John Paul II after he urged "sons of this beloved Mozambican people" who "desire the common good" to "put aside actions of destruction and try to save what remains as a basis to heal the wounds and save so many of your brothers and sisters from premature and unjust death." This matched the government's appeals to RENAMO men to lay down their arms and accept an amnesty offered even to those guilty of the most gruesome atrocities.

For all this welcome ambiguity, John Paul II's failure to condemn destabilization and his refusal to distinguish between apartheid violence and anti-apartheid resistance means that, politically speaking, his southern African tour must be seen as a qualified victory for the Pretoria regime.

Steve Askin is *In These Times*' correspondent in southern Africa.

Reuters/Bettmann Newsphoto



By Diana Johnstone

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

**A**S A GUEST OF THE SOCIALIST GROUP IN the European Parliament in Strasbourg in mid-September, Yassir Arafat spelled out the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) acceptance of a two-state solution to the conflict with Israel that would seem fair and desirable to most Europeans, if they paid attention or dared speak up. Arafat urged them to do their part in an international movement toward peaceful settlement of regional conflicts.

The Socialist Group, which has hosted Israeli Labor Party leader Shimon Peres several times at the European Parliament, decided to invite Arafat in an effort to promote Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. It was also a sign of impatience among European Socialists with their fellow Socialist Shimon Peres, Israel's foreign minister, for failing to take bold steps toward withdrawal from the Occupied Territories and negotiations with the PLO.

Replying to questions from his Socialist hosts (the largest group in the 12-nation Europarlament), as well as the Communist and Rainbow (Green) groups who also received him, Arafat made it clear that he seeks to negotiate a final peace settlement with Israel in the context of a United Nations-sponsored international conference, and would even agree to military occupation of Gaza and the West Bank by a United Nations peace-keeping force after a Palestinian state is established there, in order to ensure the region's security.

This made scant impression on the media herd in Strasbourg that was primed to see no "news" short of a unilateral declaration by Arafat recognizing the state of Israel. Since this could not and did not happen, there was "nothing new" for most of the media.

Starting with his official host, Europarlament Socialist Group chairman Rudi Arndt, a member of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), everyone kept asking Arafat to "recognize Israel." But by the time of the press conference, Arndt himself was tired of hearing the same thing. "I don't know what's the point of putting that question again and again," he snapped at a journalist. Arafat had said he'd extend his hand to any Israeli over a peace table, noted Arndt. "Anyone who can read understands what he means."

Arafat pointed out repeatedly that formal recognition is up to the Palestine National Council, the PLO parliament, which is scheduled to meet next month. The PNC must decide whether and how to proclaim an independent Palestinian state and provisional government. A Palestinian Declaration of Independence would solve the problem of the Palestinian Charter (which is interpreted by Israel's defenders as a dangerous threat) by superseding it.

Some things are stated, and some are not. The Israelis have a widely recognized state that is not only one of the world's foremost military powers but also (as Arafat reminded the European Socialists) a nuclear power. It is the Palestinians who are short of both a state and recognition.

**Toward a just peace:** Stated or not, recognition of Israel was implicit in everything Arafat said in Strasbourg, starting with his emphasis on United Nations Resolution 181 of Nov. 29, 1947, which legalized the partition of British mandate Palestine between the two states. Arafat cited former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban to the effect that the international legitimacy of Resolution 181



## EUROPE

Yassir Arafat urged members of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament to do their part in an international movement toward peaceful settlement of regional conflicts.

# PLO's Yassir Arafat on the stated and unstated

was "Israel's only birth certificate."

"We respect international legitimacy," said Arafat. "At the same time, we believe that a just peace cannot be achieved through the selective application of half what international legitimacy provided for and the dumping of the other half."

"We endorse the Charter of the United Nations and all its resolutions, including 242 and 338," the PLO chairman said. Those two resolutions, passed by the Security Council following the 1967 six-day and 1973 Yom Kippur wars respectively, called for withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories they had occupied in Gaza and the West Bank and for respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of all the states in the region, as well as their rights to live in peace within safe and recognized boundaries.

This acceptance implies not only recognition of Israel, but also a Palestinian state within the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, that is, a smaller area than granted in the original 1947 partition. The precise boundaries, as well as the right of Palestinian refugees to return home, would be the main tough business of peace negotiations at the international conference. Israel itself has never defined its own boundaries.

According to Arafat, the PLO would accept a European force under international U.N. supervision to replace Israeli occupation forces in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. The international force "could stay on after the establishment of the independent Palestinian state for as long as the Security Council deems necessary to guarantee the security of everyone concerned," he said.

**A call for pluralism:** Implicit and unstated in Arafat's appeal to Europe was not

only recognition of Israel, the other state in the two-state solution, but also a demand for solidarity in defense of democratic pluralism against the danger of religious war.

The Palestinian state, Arafat said, "will have a republican, democratic and multi-party system; it will abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and will not discriminate among its citizens on the basis of color, race or religion." The Palestinian people, he said, have "given the world its three monotheistic religions—Judaism,

**PLO leader Yassir Arafat made it clear that he seeks to negotiate a final peace settlement with Israel in the context of a United Nations-sponsored international conference.**

Christianity and Islam." The people of the *Intifada*, the Palestinian people "whom I represent," said Arafat, are committed to peace based on justice. "Our heritage and culture and our Islam, Christianity and Judaism disallow hatred and repudiate aggression...open our minds to peace based on justice...."

At his news conference, Arafat greeted Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan with a friendly "*Shana Tova*," wishing Happy New Year on Rosh Hashana to Jews in Israel and throughout the world. He said he hoped Jews in Israel would choose "a year of peace."

"Peace is worth sacrifices," Arafat observed to Nathan, who risks a three-year jail sentence in Israel for interviewing the PLO leader for his radio station "Voice of Peace." Arafat again stressed that a new Palestinian state would be "the land of Jews, Christians and Moslems."

Necessarily unstated but implicit in this ecumenical emphasis was the warning that if the secular, democratic West fails to support the secular, democratic PLO as representative of the Palestinians of the *Intifada*, then leadership may slip away from the PLO into the hands of anti-democratic, anti-pluralistic, Moslem fundamentalists.

In Gaza, where the Israeli occupation is particularly hard to bear, the Movement of the Islamic Resistance, known as Hamas, is challenging the PLO leadership. Hamas opposes Arafat's bids for peace and calls for holy war against Israel. The Israeli security forces' tolerance of Hamas contrasts strangely with the arrests and crackdowns against PLO people who call for dialogue and coexistence among different religions. The *New York Times* quoted a Western diplomat who found it "remarkable," with so many people being arrested, that "someone like Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who just goes on saying the most awful things about Jews, isn't touched."

**Israel's choice:** Israeli security forces can be expected to favor Islamic fanatics against PLO moderates for the following reasons: the rise of Moslem extremists would split the Palestinian uprising and put Christian Palestinians in a particularly difficult position; a Moslem religious interpretation of the conflict would comfort the extremist Jewish interpretation of Israel's destiny; and Israeli leaders may secretly feel confident they can defeat a backward, irrational Islamic religious movement.

This third calculation has already been seen at work in Iran, where the U.S. for many years systematically helped suppress all the rational, secular, Westernized branches of the progressive opposition as potentially communist, leaving the field clear to supposedly harmless religious movements to channel the people's revolt.

The *Intifada* has helped free the PLO from the Arab states, and given it an historic opportunity to make peace with Israel. If this chance is missed, the next cycle of violence could be unstoppable. In Strasbourg, Arafat reminded Europeans of their responsibilities.

The European socialist movement, he recalled, "exerted special efforts to help set up the state of Israel." It did not cross their minds, he said, that the diplomatic solution of the problem of victims of Nazism was "at the Palestinian people's expense, in that our people have been victimized by the victim and its allies." Britain had special responsibilities, he noted, having failed to keep its mandate obligation to grant early independence to a Palestinian state.

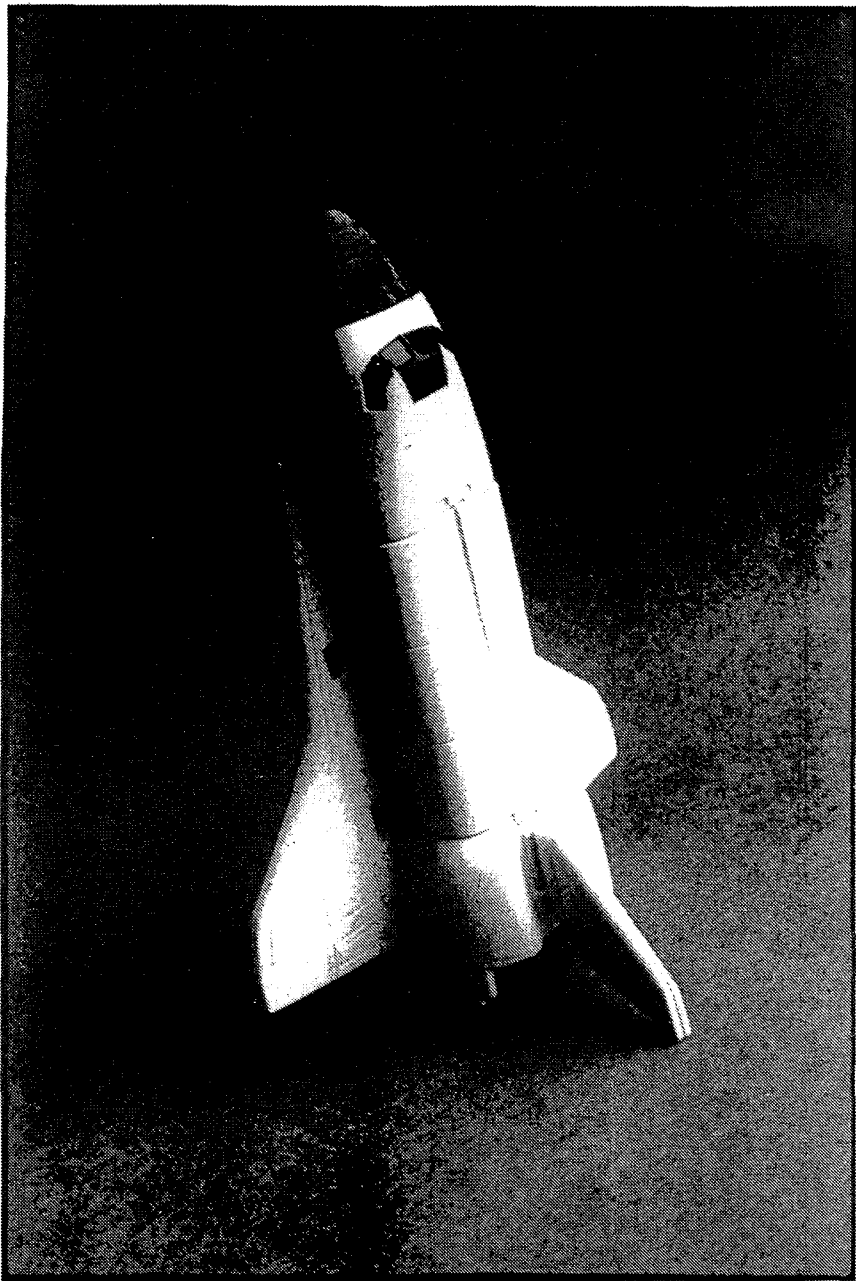
Lamenting Europe's reluctance to shoulder its responsibilities, Arafat predicted that "freedom and peace are certainly in the offing" and invited Europe to abandon its spectator role and take part.

Specifically, Arafat wondered "whether Europe will recognize a provisional government. The answer will influence our decision."

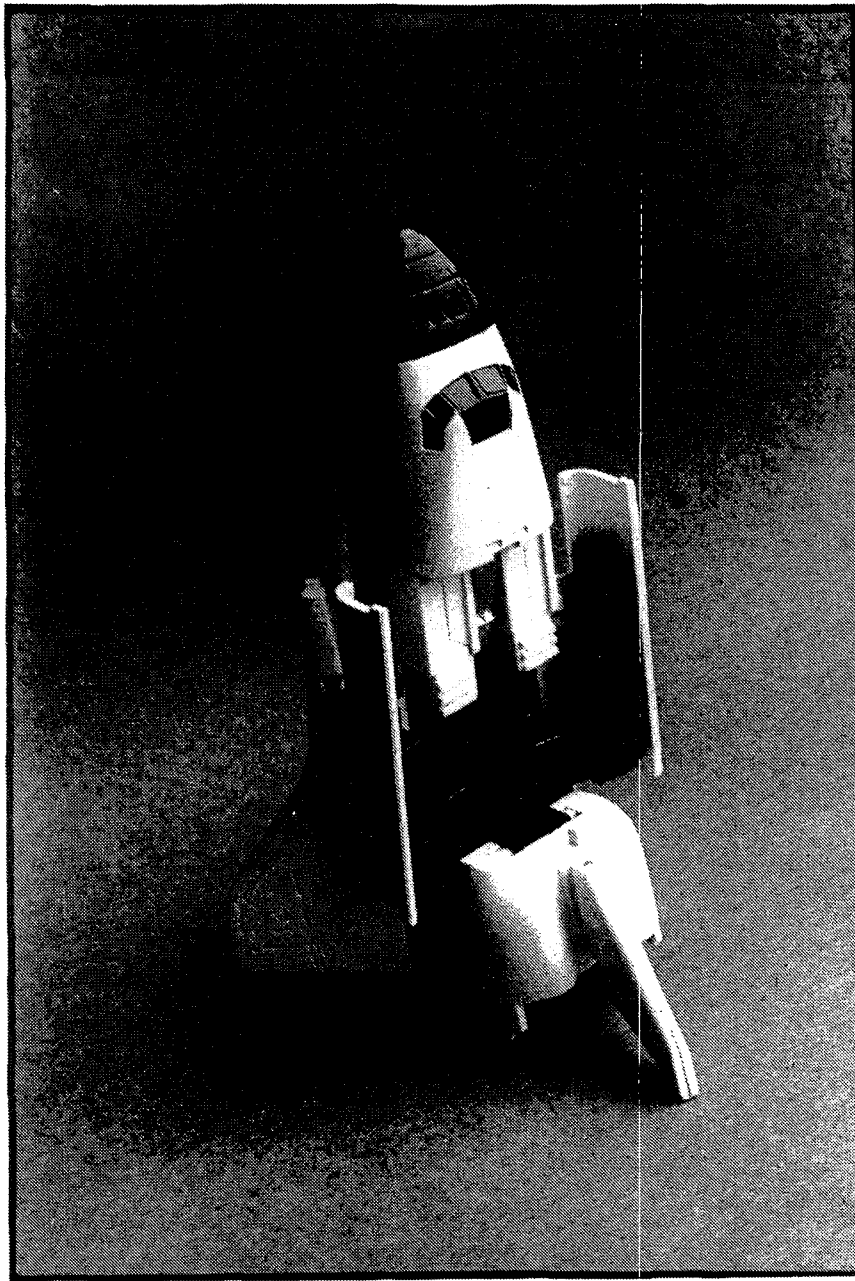
The question of peace should not just be put to the PLO or to Israel but to the world as a whole, Arafat said. "This is the responsibility of the international community as a whole." □

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# FLIGHTS



Photographs: © 1988 Miles DeCoster Toy: © 1985 Bandai

By Jeremiah Creedon

**A**FTER MANY DELAYS IN GETTING THE SPACE shuttle Discovery off the ground it may only be a coincidence that the first shuttle flight since the Challenger accident has been scheduled to embark during the Olympics. Even so, NASA must realize this launch date poses a unique opportunity: access to a vast audience funneled into patriotic consensus by the non-partisan appeal of sport.

Advertisers learned long ago to exploit the Olympic mood brilliantly; NASA, with its own commercial aspirations, could do so as well. A prewashed American psyche, softened to the verge of tears, may be just what a troubled space program needs to sell its whiter, brighter shuttle.

With its redesigned craft and its all-male crew, the Discovery mission is billed as America's sober, safer return to space; and yet there's concern that all the changes have created a new set of unknowns. No one can say how the ship will handle in orbit—or even on the ground, where the Discovery must escape a clouded political atmosphere thickened by the ceaseless ground chatter of public relations. If the flight succeeds, then perhaps the astronaut could be lofted again to a height in the public imagination above mere politics, back to a noble status enjoyed by only one other figure: the Olympic athlete.

But NASA may also find its fall from grace is not so easily reversed. Revamping the space shuttle may prove simpler than rebuilding an exploded myth.

**Sublime propaganda:** Prior to Challenger, the astronaut had served within our official mythology as the American ideal made flesh.

The media played a big role in shaping the myth, which tragically achieved its most elegant expression at the time of Challenger's end.

*The Dream Is Alive*, a documentary on shuttle flight, was showing at, among other places, the Science Museum in St. Paul, Minn., on the night of the accident. Narrated by Walter Cronkite, the film was meant as a tribute to the courage and technology that made NASA's program possible. The footage was stupendous, and the theater's concave screen heightened an illusion that the viewer had journeyed into space.

Just as vivid, though more complex, was the illusion of utter beauty and fulfillment surrounding the astronauts. One of them was Judith Resnick, who had died on the Challenger. On film she epitomized the perfect woman of the '80s: competent, committed handsome—a worthy companion for her

male crew mates, who epitomized the perfect man. Watching the astronauts tumble weightlessly above the blue earth suggested the films Leni Riefenstahl made of German athletes at the 1936 Olympics. However much these cinematic poems differed in what they glorified, all were examples of propaganda made sublime.

The accident, however, had turned this triumphant song to American prowess into something sad and more revealing. Overnight the documentary had become an artifact that, like any such object, was inscribed with a multitude of cultural assumptions. The film now transported the viewer through time as well as space, lifting us to a vantage beyond our historical moment.

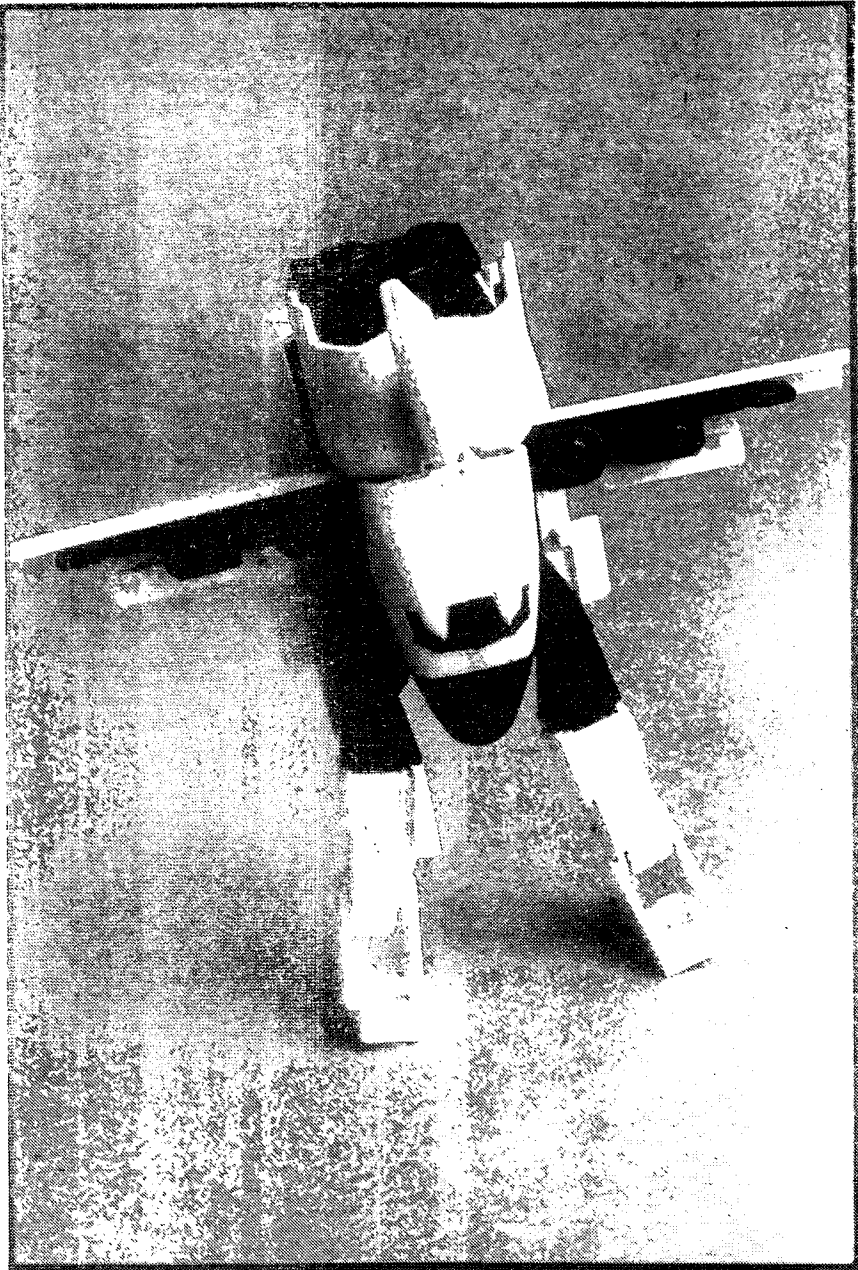
And what one could see, looking back, was a tableau depicting America's destiny in space, as the fulfillment of an ideological vision, a "dream" of utopian capitalism that could never be realized. The astronauts played a major part in shaping this vision, but not as individuals. The deference of these perfect beings to a technocratic colossus—the state—was a tribute to the state's power, a symbolic subservience they shared with the athlete. In their playful defiance of gravity, the ultimate human triumph over nature, they were not so much people as personifications of an arrogant age—like the beautiful but nameless figures vaulting over bulls on the side of a Minoan urn.

**Harnessing Eros:** An age often produces a figure who personifies its greatest achievements, Leonardo Da Vinci being the common example. In our age, where the notion of genius has been challenged, a more appropriate choice might be a collective, some silicon-era beehive working on a massive project beyond any one person's com-

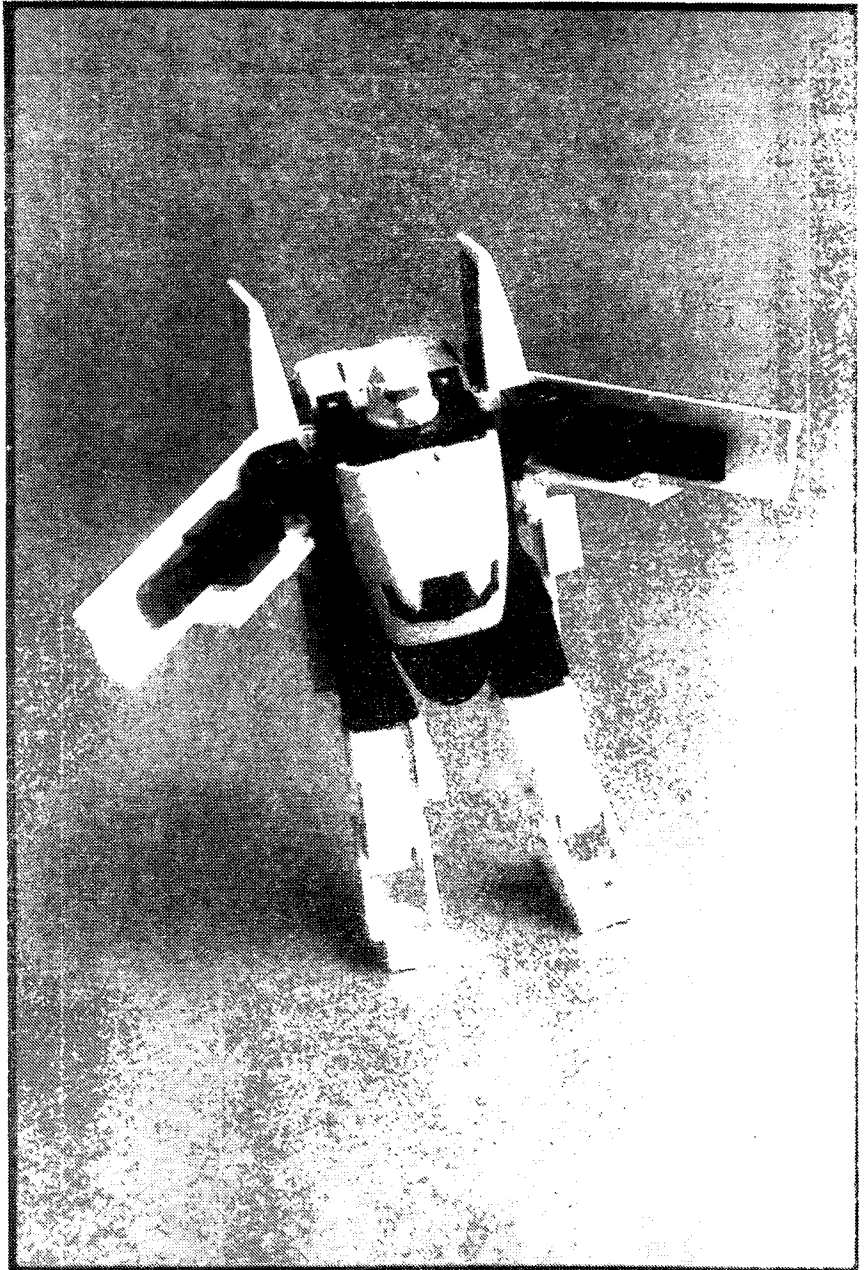
prehension. For decades, NASA was considered by many to be the most noble example of this group genius. The space program's success reflected a similar realignment in the country at large. America was learning to value corporate cultures more than the individuals who composed them.

An evolving American myth demanded new heroes, or rather old heroes who had been refigured. This shift was well underway within NASA when the shuttle era began in the '70s. The image of the astronaut as celestial cowboy was outmoded. The new astronaut was an idealized composite of the American character, a concept perfectly realized by the Challenger team with its mix of genders, races and professions. And where they operated—the orbiter—became the perfect workplace, a utopian arena where both sexes strove as equals on a common mission. Space flight was never to be





# FANTASY



mistaken for just a job; it was an all-consuming, all-fulfilling labor of love.

Herbert Marcuse, mixing Freud and Marx, argued in the '60s that capitalism made such love-invested labor nearly impossible. Well-paid Americans remained miserable, it was said, because they were "estranged" from their life-activities and fellow workers.

The space shuttle was official proof that the left was wrong, or so it seemed. In its purest form, symbolized by the white orbiter rafted into the ether on its fiery plume, American capitalism achieved the transcendent union between work and the worker that socialism promised, but never provided.

The key, as the space program had apparently learned, was to unlock the power of Eros just as an earlier generation had unleashed the energies of the atom. A fusion of both forces would loft us toward the "final frontier," a realm where no man had gone before, and never would, it seemed, without the liberated American woman to accompany him.

**The shell of fantasy:** For a nation oddly squeamish about sex, the new myth was a first step toward crossing the psychic hurdle posed by sex on extended space missions. The new myth promoted a mode of intimacy of the group. It was the intimacy at the heart of one's so-called marriage to a career, or even to an object. This new configuration, exemplified by a woman astronaut like Resnick and vulgarized by countless sitcom singles, was now celebrated in the media to a degree once reserved for the marital bond between hetero couples.

Putting a new premium on the group meant that another social unit, the family, would have to be devalued. Social critic Christopher Lasch has argued that weaken-

ing the family resulted not in personal liberation, but in the loss of a key defense against an overly centralized state. With families compromised, the worst case one could imagine was a culture shaped by mass events, big companies, government campaigns, organized sport and advertising. The best case was the starship Enterprise, where individuals mysteriously unmoored from the tethers of family could fly off on a great Eros-laden joyride into the unknown.

Throughout the '80s, television, the spin-

ner of cultural alibis and rationales, idealized this group ethos. *St. Elsewhere* and *Hill Street Blues*, along with the more recent *L.A. Law*, feature ensemble casts and characters with lives revolving around the workplace. These shows are always written with an awareness that the profit motive, politics and public relations figure mightily in the American workplace.

But in their miniatures of modern life, the writers flip the image, giving predominance to camaraderie and love. These shows are *Star Trek's* real generation, when finding fulfillment at work becomes a daydream more exotic than meeting a beautiful siren on a distant planet.

A similar shell of fantasy surrounded NASA and its shuttle program—until Challenger exploded. It soon became clear that the image of a perfect world where even work became weightless play disguised a tragically

familiar place marked by clashing egos, sagging morale, cascading errors and a clandestine military agenda.

Our white-winged hope, capitalism's hybrid Pegasus, was really no more than a caisson for carting weapons into space. It was the white radiance of the craft itself, perhaps the most striking art object this culture has ever created, that blinded us to the darker policy effecting it.

It wasn't clear until months after the accident how deep these contradictions ran. When the truth was known, the entire event took on a new dimension—that of classic tragedy. The tension between absolute truth and human illusion had violently resolved itself, a ritual return to state harmony demanding the sacrifice of individual innocents—namely, the astronauts, whom NASA had duplicitly exploited.

For a brief moment, American hubris had been daunted. But human fallibility springs eternal.

When Discovery was rolled inch by inch from hangar to launch pad—a re-emergence celebrated last Fourth of July—the national press responded just as cautiously, unsure of its role in what is said to be a new era. It isn't.

The problems with America's space program, like those plaguing nuclear power, are more profound than the society is ready to admit. The truth may be that our smart collectives can take us no higher, that we have reached a technological ceiling. If so, then the realistic thing to do is wait for new advances. NASA, by mandate, must shun this advice and fire on—the modern equivalent of ancient man loosing arrows at the sun. □

**Jeremiah Creedon** is a writer living in Minneapolis.



# EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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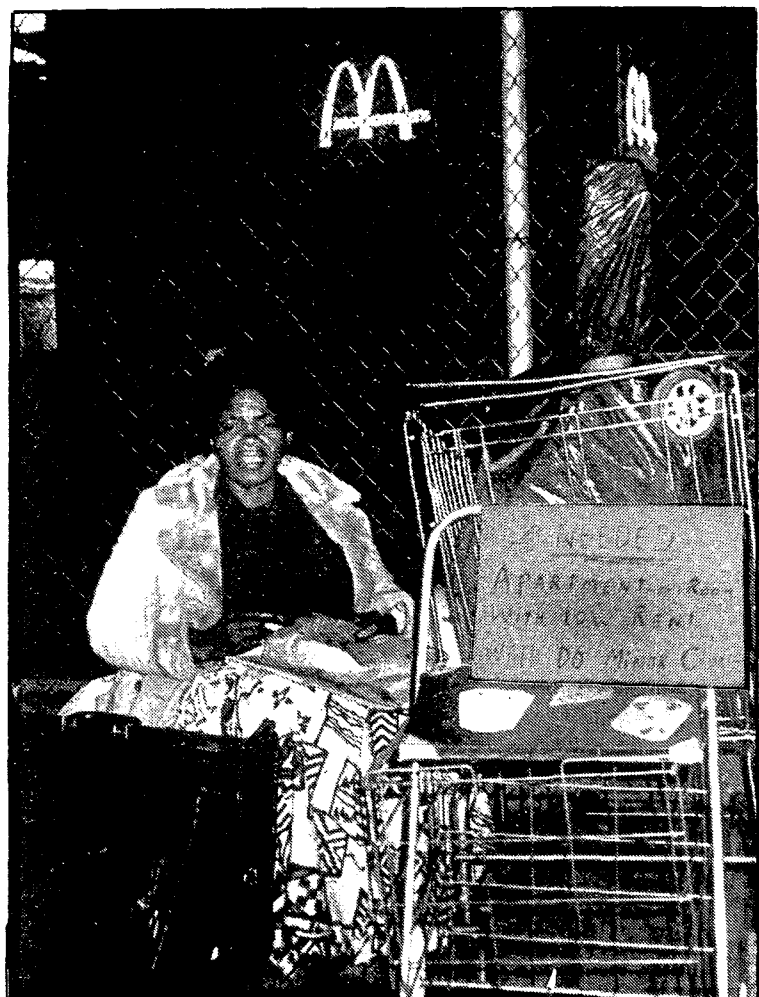
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Mel Rosenthal

## Scientists' homelessness report is a welcome step

In a government-sponsored study of the health needs of the homeless, the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine has concluded quietly that the health problems of homeless people—and poor people in general—are not narrowly technical, but must be addressed on the level of social policy. Aside from some of the specific recommendations, there was little new either in the findings or proposals of this committee. Even so, it was unusual for a committee of scientists to issue a report so clearly critical of the social policies of the government.

The report confirmed that the homeless are younger, more ethnically diverse and increasingly more likely to be members of families than is generally believed. It also found that children under the age of 18, usually from a family headed by a mother, are the fastest growing group among the many subpopulations of the homeless. It pointed out that homeless people tend to be long-term local resi-

dents who have gone through several stages of doubling up with family or friends before going out on the streets. Still, some 30-40 percent of homeless people show "evidence of some type of major mental disorder."

Three major causes for these growing numbers of homeless were identified: a decreased supply of housing in the face of increased needs; more stringent criteria for welfare assistance—and declining purchasing power of benefits for those still eligible—at a time of increasing poverty; and deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, along with non-institutionalization—not admitting people for psychiatric care except for very brief periods.

Though genteelly presented, the report's recommendations are a stinging rebuke to the politicians of the Reagan era. It suggests that "decent housing is not only socially desirable but is necessary for the prevention of disease and the promotion of health. Yet the number of housing units for people with low incomes has been steadily decreasing since 1981, while the number of people needing such housing has been increasing."

Further, the "issue of affordable housing has two sides": the supply of inexpensive housing and an income sufficient to afford it. In many communities, the Institute of Medicine's committee found, "neither employment at the current minimum wage nor welfare benefits for those who are eligible provide enough income for them to acquire adequate housing." Therefore, welfare payments should be increased, and "the relation of the minimum-wage level to housing costs should be re-examined."

As for welfare payments, the report suggested that the federal government "should review all federally funded entitlement programs in order to create rational eligibility standards and establish benefit levels based on the actual cost of living in a specific region." That means that both states and the federal government should increase entitlement benefits so that the recipients will be able to afford the housing, food or health care for which the benefits are intended, the committee explained.

A careful reading of the report reveals a social agenda sharply at odds with that of federal, state and local governments of the '80s. Even so, 10 of the 13 committee members found the report "too limited" in its language and approach. "Contemporary American homelessness is an outrage, a national scandal," they wrote in a supplementary statement. Its character requires the careful analysis of the report, they allowed, but "its tragedy demands something more direct and human, less qualified and detached." The report, they complained, did not "capture the extent of our anger and dismay."

The anger and dismay are understandable, even admirable. And the report's conclusions are honest and helpful. But though the study was welcome, it was not needed to tell us what many people have known for some time. What is needed is a political movement to change our social priorities as a nation. That's implicit in the report, but it needs to be made explicit in our everyday lives. One might have hoped that this would be reflected in the current presidential campaign. So far, it hasn't.

## House Democrats pledge allegiance to Bush tactics

The spectacle of George Bush running around the country wrapped in the American flag would be hilarious were it not for the possibility that this man could become president of the United States. But ludicrous and depressing as his performance is, it pales before the House of Representatives' response to Bush's discovery of the Pledge of Allegiance. The pledge has been around since 1892. For 96 years House members never once saw a need to prove their patriotism by reciting it.

But when Bush attacked Michael Dukakis for having vetoed a bill that would have required all Massachusetts school teachers to lead students each day in a recital of the pledge, suddenly it was early morning in America's Capitol. Republican members of the House demanded that each legislative day begin with a recitation of the pledge, and the spineless Democrats, fearful that the public would see them as unpatriotic, agreed. So, at least for the duration of the election campaign, we see the nation's legislators mimicking grade-schoolers, and in the process validating the contemptible tactics of the Bush campaign.

Dukakis himself has done little better. He did issue one statement explaining that in vetoing the pledge bill, he had merely followed the

advice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. And he asserted that this was his patriotic duty. But then, taking his lead from his opponent, he rushed to the Statue of Liberty and shot off his own recitation of the grade-schoolers' rite for the TV cameras. This mockery of patriotism was a sad day for Liberty—a kind of Statuary rape—and, of course, it only gave the public reason to believe that maybe George had a point after all.

All of this is particularly ironic in the light of the origins of the pledge, which was written by Francis Bellamy, a first cousin of Edward Bellamy, author of *Looking Backward*. Edward was a utopian socialist whose novel, published in 1887, sold more than half a million copies and inspired the formation of Nationalist clubs, which quickly became the largest organization of American socialists in the 19th century. In 1889, two years after *Looking Backward* appeared, Francis—himself a Baptist minister—played a leading role in founding the Society of Christian Socialists, which was closely associated with the Nationalist movement.

Appalled by the growth of large-scale corporations in the decades following the Civil War, the Nationalists believed that democracy could be preserved only with the nationalization of major industries. Socialism, they believed, would "enact into everyday living the ethics of Christ's gospel." And when in 1892 Francis wrote the Pledge of Allegiance for a children's magazine of which he was an editor, he had in mind the defense of the nation through the socialization of its capitalists industries. He would not be pleased to know how his creation is now being used.



# LETTERS

## Furloughs

AS A NEW SUBSCRIBER TO *IN THESE TIMES*, I HAVE been impressed with its content, although I don't necessarily agree with a number of the points-of-view it contains. However, the Inside Story by David Moberg, "Bush hits Duke with a furlough blow" (*ITT*, Sept. 7) really disturbed me—not because he bares such an extremely liberal point of view, but because he presented such a distorted view of the furlough issue as it stood in Massachusetts. It isn't what he said that bothered me—it's what he didn't say!

To begin with, the furlough procedure in Massachusetts has not been practiced in many states. To the contrary, it is my understanding that Massachusetts was one of only three of four states in the country that provided furlough to criminals sentenced to life for murder. Also, Moberg passes over Mr. Horton's escapades very lightly. He criticizes errors in reporting, but does not divulge the horrors the Maryland couple suffered, and what they are still going through mentally. It's enough to say that when Horton was caught here in Maryland, the state refused to extradite him to Massachusetts to be sure that he would not be released again to commit more mayhem. Finally, he fails to point out that when the legislation to stop these furloughs was sent to the governor, he was forced to sign it—not because he wanted to but because of pressures from the state voters.

Moberg can quote statistics all he wants to try to justify his position. To me, such statistics do nothing more than distort the true facts in the public eye. The most important issue for any governing body should be the safety of the honest people of the state or municipality, the people whose lives are endangered every time a criminal such as Horton is allowed to roam the countryside. Let's face it, these furloughs are calculated risks and the people are pawns in this deadly game. Gov. Dukakis' concern for the welfare of these hardened criminals is a breach of faith—a failure to recognize the interests of honest citizens while placing his own social beliefs above those best serving his constituents.

Mel Levin  
Towson, Md.

**David Moberg replies:** At least 33, not three or four, states have some form of furlough for convicts serving life sentences. The statistics are important: they provide evidence that furlough programs significantly reduce the likelihood of released prisoners committing crimes. If the safety of honest people is important, then furlough systems make sense.

## Is it a country?

JEROLD STARR'S RECENT ARTICLE ON TEACHING about the Vietnam War (*ITT*, Sept. 7) reminded me of an incident in my class at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. (It bears noting that our university houses the Joiner Center for War and Social Consequences, which seeks to bring awareness of the Vietnam War to campus in many ways, including film festivals, guest speakers, services to veterans and an oral history project done with the Indochinese population. Not everyone, however, participates in the Center, as the story illustrates.)

I taught an ESL (English as a second language) course last year consisting of about

one-third Vietnamese students. Each student was paired with a pen-pal in a native-speaker English course and letters were exchanged on a weekly basis. When everyone finally met their partners at the end of the term, one American freshman introduced his Vietnamese pen-pal to the group: "This is Nguyen, and he's from Vietnam [hesitating and looking at his teacher]...that is the name of a place, right, not just a war?"

Wendy Schoener  
Cambridge, Mass.

## Complicit

REGARDING PAUL BASS' ARTICLE, "BLOODSPORT with Mort" (*ITT*, Sept. 14):

My only thought is that only a moron would go on a TV program run by another moron like Mort Downey! Downey needs victims to volunteer for his abuse, and what is unbelievable to me is that they continue to do so.

The way to get rid of a jerk like Mort Downey is to deny him his pool of targets and his brand of "garbage pail" media entertainment will disappear.

I don't feel sorry for Paul Bass. As far as I can see, he asked for it!

William F. Johnston  
Tacoma, Wash.

## Mary Magdalene

IN THE REVIEW OF *THE LAST TEMPTATION OF Christ* (*ITT*, Sept. 14), Danny Duncan Columns seems to accept a tradition about Mary Magdalene as based on a biblical account: "Magdalene was a prostitute who forsook that profession to join Jesus' band." From the Gospels we only know of her that she had been "healed of evil spirits and infirmities" (epilepsy? mental illness?), that she was one of the women who provided for Jesus and his disciples "out of their substance" (Luke 8:2,3) and that she was one of the women who found his tomb empty. (Mark 16:9 says that Jesus had cast seven devils out of her, but this passage is almost certainly a 2nd-century addition.)

One wonders why later tradition identified her as a prostitute or an adulteress. Some even believe she was Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus and Martha, but do not explain a connection with two different places. Thomas Sheehan (*The First Coming*, p. 148) says that only her name appears in all the Gospel accounts of the empty tomb and asks, "Could this fact reflect an accurate historical recollection of at least one person who came to the tomb on the first Easter morning?"

Why Mary Magdalene? Nowhere else in the Bible does she appear as a specific per-

son. Why was she, of all those intimately associated with Jesus, the only one whose name appears in every account of the empty tomb? Why has the church been at such pains to make her an adulteress or a prostitute? I offer this idea freely to any feminist scholar who wishes to make it the subject of a thesis.

Also, why are the objectors to this film so aroused over the idea of Jesus' sexuality? Since the Council of Nicea, church doctrine has taught that Jesus Christ was both wholly God and wholly man. Homosexuality aside, can one be wholly man without ever having loved a woman? Christians seem never to have been uncomfortable with the other temptations related of Jesus. Why this attitude toward sex? In Genesis 1 humankind is commanded to be fruitful and multiply. How can a man and a woman obey the commandment without sexual relations? Why is such obedience sinful?

John A. Leininger  
Waverly, Ohio

## Yom Kippur 5749

I REMEMBER AS A CHILD WONDERING AT HIGH HOLY Day services each fall why I was expected to atone for sins that I had not personally committed and that, in some instances, I had never even heard of. It is only in recent years as I have struggled to face fully the catastrophic consequences for the Palestinian people of our century's greatest Jewish triumph—the founding and flourishing of the State of Israel—and of the subsequent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, that I have begun to experience a deep need for collective atonement.

An Israeli friend with kindred sensibilities describes his worst current nightmare—a vivid walk through a Palestinian *Yad Vashem*—and his waking thought that someday such an institution will have to be created and that Jews will have to go there. But need we wait until then to begin, at least, the painful process of acknowledgement of wrongdoing, of atonement?

Last year after Yom Kippur I was profoundly moved by a piece in *Al Fajr* written by Moshe ben Shlomo which commenced with the question, "How do we atone?" followed by a description of the murder of two Palestinians by Israeli military authorities and an anguished litany of other abuses. It is noteworthy that ben Shlomo's powerful piece was published almost two full months before the beginning of the Palestinians' brave *intifada* and Israel's swift "iron fist" response. And yet he queried:

How do we atone? You ask what we have to atone for? We must atone for the dozens of prisoners in our jails without charges or

trial and the dozens of others confined to their towns or villages, all by the stroke of the military's pen. For the dozens of people deported from their homeland who can never return. For the dozens of dozens who sleep under the stars because their homes were demolished in the name of our security.

As we pray in the Old City, will we remember to atone for the homes we stole a few meters away? For the houses we stole and the families we dispossessed? When first I came I thought I saw the Arabs' hearts stir at the sound of the shofar. I thought I saw this, but maybe it was a shudder of fear.

And ben Shlomo continued:

...although we have much to atone for, Israeli politicians...praise our democracy. Jews in the U.S. send their dollars to fill our coffers...and even our liberal journalists slap us on the backs because torture here, according to Amnesty International, is not as bad as in Iran. Have we really gone that mad?

These words were published on Oct. 11, 1987. How much worse things are now! This year our Day of Atonement is hardly long enough to recount the new Palestinian dead—hundreds of them, with (for us) unpronounceable names and interchangeable, keffiyeh-wrapped faces, with remarkable absence of fear, with hands raised in defiance and pride and a fierce determination to be free—the latest victims of Israeli soldier and settler violence. Yet each bullet that has found its deadly mark, each lethal, brutal beating, each tear-gas canister that has taken its toll in the lives of the old, the young, the sickly, the unborn cries out for some kind of world-wide, collective Jewish atonement.

And the permanently maimed (some, alas, deliberately)—deprived of eyes, of the use of limbs and reproductive organs—what a legacy of suffering, of bitterness, of rage is left for our children and our children's children to confront. And no longer "dozens" of Palestinian prisoners jailed without charge or trial, but now thousands—a community's leadership held under conditions that must make God weep that Jews, of all people, could do such things to other human beings.

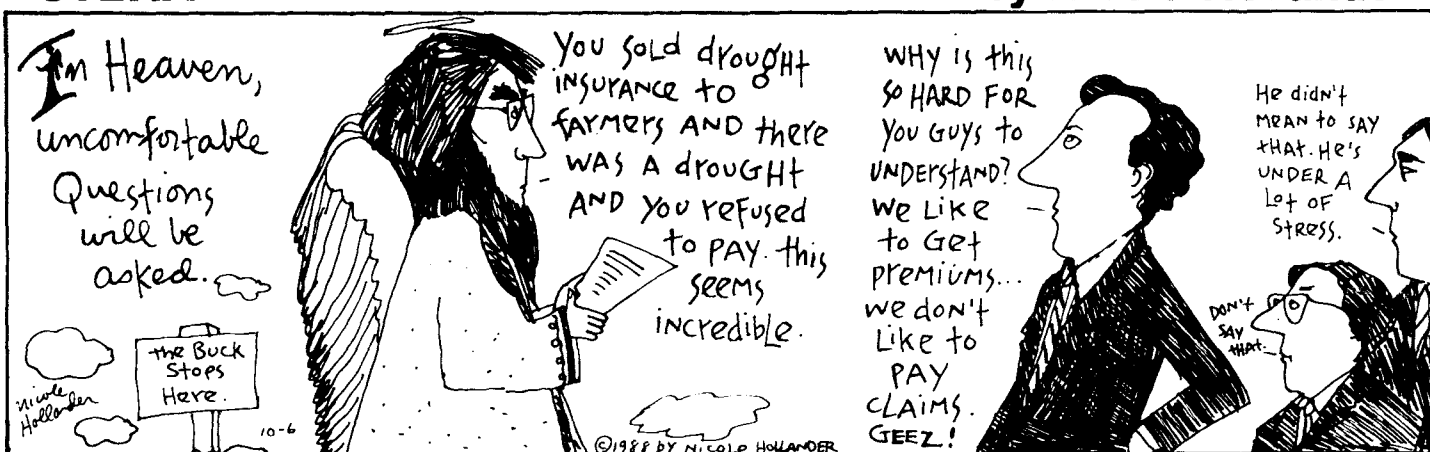
Is this, then, what it has all come to? That finally, after two millenia, when such wanderings are mostly a thing of the past for our own people, we now condemn the best and the brightest, the most dedicated and accomplished of another people to that same tragic fate?

I can only conclude, with Moshe ben Shlomo, "We have much to atone for. Whom do we ask for forgiveness?"

Hilda Silverman

Project Coordinator for America-Israel Council  
for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Philadelphia

## SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander



By Joshua Henkin

**S**HOULD WE GIVE MONEY TO BEGGARS? For reasons that are hard to figure out, this question has been making front-page news in recent months. Whatever the reason, the issue is newsworthy, but in a distressing sort of way. It's newsworthy because the question really is being debated—because many people are indeed arguing that it's wrong to give to panhandlers.

Let me start by saying that I turn my back on panhandlers as much as the next guy. I usually try to give, but sometimes I just don't feel like it. I don't have much of an excuse. Even though I live in a neighborhood with lots of beggars, my standard of living wouldn't suffer terribly if I were to give a quarter to everyone who asked. And my time surely isn't so precious that I couldn't afford to stop several times a day to reach into my pocket. Like everyone else, I cope with the stress of life in the city by erecting walls around myself.

People like me must accept the fact that we're hypocrites when we don't give—which is why it's easier to resist giving "on principle." I don't mean to suggest, therefore, that everyone who argues against giving is looking for an easy way out of an ethical dilemma, but some of the reasons being concocted these days seem forced.

**To give or not to give:** The anti-givers make many arguments. They claim, first, that giving money to panhandlers simply encourages them to beg—that if we would stop shelling out change these vagrants would look for jobs. Second, that panhandlers spend our money on alcohol or drugs. Third, that many of the beggars aren't needy at all, but imposters raking in the dough. Fourth, that we would do better to give our money to a "real" charity. And fifth, that our contributions are simply tokens designed to assuage our guilt-feelings. In New York Mayor Ed Koch's words, panhandlers are "addicts, alcoholics and con artists," and if we feel guilty we ought to see a shrink.

## Does giving encourage panhandlers' way of life?

It's hard to take seriously the claim that panhandlers are on the increase because begging has become a desirable way to make a living. You don't need to have an overly inflated sense of pride to find it demeaning to stand on the street corner and watch people move out of your way as if you had plague. Anyone who's ever tried handing out leaflets begins to get the idea. Given this fact, not to mention the paltry wages that come with the territory, were panhandling actually to become a good way to support oneself it would say far more about society's ability to provide worthwhile jobs than it would about the state of sloth in America.

In any case, the argument is absurd. Panhandling isn't chosen by people with alternatives. Anyone who has ever walked the streets of New York City knows that the average bum would have a difficult enough time trying to get a seat in McDonald's, let alone a job there. Panhandlers are often faced with the Catch-22 of needing a job in order to afford a home and needing an address in order to get a job, and we kid ourselves if we think that the panhandling problem is, even in part, a result of our generosity. The apparent increase in panhandlers is much more easily attributable to the fact that the federal housing budget has been cut from \$33 billion to \$13 billion in the last eight years.

Of course, the problem cannot be blamed simply on the Reagan administration's housing policies, and many people base their arguments against giving on the fact that a large number—though no one knows how large—of the homeless are alcoholics or drug addicts.

Such concern for the health of the homeless would be heartwarming were it not so disingenuous. After all, if we wanted to make sure that panhandlers got their RDA, we'd take the extra minute to go into a store and buy them a sandwich or some coffee. In any case, if those who objected to giving to beggars were instead donating their quarters to shorten the months-long waiting period at detoxification centers, their

complaints would sound more genuine.

**A simple reason:** It's foolish to pretend that giving money to the homeless helps get them off the streets, but it's equally foolish to pretend that it helps keep them there. Alcoholism and drug addiction are serious and difficult problems, but it makes no sense to claim that these problems are any harder to overcome simply because we give change to beggars. Alcoholics and drug addicts need their fix, and they'll get it one way or another—even if they have to steal. The reason I try to give is quite simple: the panhandler needs my change more than I do, by which I mean that she needs something—food, coffee, cigarettes, alcohol, whatever—to get her through the night, and I can't find a good reason to deny it to her.

Those of us who focus on the alcohol and drug issue ultimately seem to be searching for a convenient way to deny the panhandlers' humanity, to justify the discrepancy between our comfort and theirs on the grounds that we are productive members of society while they are parasites lying in the gutter in a drunken stupor. Such a pat dichotomy allows us to avoid the un-

**Most New Yorkers know that the average bum would have trouble getting a seat in McDonald's, let alone a job.**

comfortable question of whether we all automatically lead more productive lives—in any meaningful sense—than street people do; or whether we simply have defined "productive" to describe the lives of people like us: people who get up in the morning, go to work and return to a cozy home and a warm dinner.

Granted, guilt plays a role in peoples' urge to give—but why shouldn't it? Ed Koch's exhortations to see a psychologist notwithstanding, guilt isn't such a bad thing. It reflects not only our capacity to empathize with the less fortunate, but also our accurate moral intuition that we are responsible for others even if we've never wronged them. This conception of responsibility is hard to accept in a country that, even today, 50 years after the birth of the welfare state, thinks that our principal duty to others is to leave them alone, a country where the myth of the self-made man dies hard, a country still influenced by the Darwinist notion that we must pull ourselves up by the bootstraps or be left to rot in the gutter.

Ultimately, what Koch and others mean when they say we shouldn't feel guilty is that we shouldn't feel responsible. For isn't that why so many of us have been complaining that panhandlers are a terrible "nuisance"—because they make us feel responsible? Sure, they're dirty and smelly and noisy; but that's not the point. Traffic and garbage are also dirty, smelly and noisy, and there's no shortage of them in

America's cities. But traffic and garbage aren't human, so they don't make us feel guilty, despite ourselves.

**The charity argument:** Giving to "real" charities is important, but how many of us apportion every last dime of our budget so that we can honestly argue that we're unable to give to panhandlers as well? Giving only to "real" charities is an easy way out because it lets us feel generous while remaining detached. As Jonathan Kozol, author of the highly acclaimed chronicle of New York's homeless, *Rachel and Her Children*, said when interviewed by *Time*: "This business of walk past the poor and write a check when you get home is a yuppie transaction of the cleanest kind. It lets us anesthetize our consciences."

Kozol's point is important because it reminds us that the impact that giving—or failing to give—has on us is at least as significant as the impact it has on the panhandler. The Talmud states that "the poor in your own city take precedence." Today, by contrast, the tendency is to ignore the poor who are dying on our own doorsteps—a tendency taken to its logical conclusion at this year's Democratic convention in Atlanta, where there was a huge picture display paying tribute to America's homeless, even while Atlanta officials were rounding up the city's homeless and placing them in motels. The photographs sanitized homelessness, allowing people to conceive of the problem as if it were the starving in India—something distant that could be confronted with the checkbook instead of with the eyes and the heart.

Not long ago I found myself in the uncomfortable position of needing a dollar to get home. Left with no other alternative, I approached a well-dressed, middle-aged woman and explained my predicament. She promptly handed me the money, no questions asked. While there's no way of proving it, I doubt if I could have gotten the money if I had really been in need—if I had been a hungry beggar instead of an upper-middle-class young man who, if worst came to worst, would have had to walk five or six miles to get home. The point is that I, with my crew-neck sweater and docksiders, came from her world; I could have been her next-door neighbor, even her son.

For the same reason, it's not surprising to find that the poor are more generous to panhandlers than the rich. "People driving Jaguars," one woman said, "they give you 50 cents and tell you not to buy booze. You go to a black neighborhood, it's no big deal for them to give you \$2, \$3, \$5 or \$20 for that matter. They're more receptive to being poor."

Ultimately, that seems to be the main question: to what extent will we allow ourselves to imagine being in the panhandler's shoes? If we resist imagining switching places, there is no shortage of excuses for passing the beggar by. After all, everyone's heard of a con artist who's hoodwinked his way to riches, and it's all too easy to dismiss all beggars as a result. But such stories, even if true, say as much about the average beggar as stories about the Cadillac-riding welfare recipient say about the average person on welfare. For the person who imagines himself in the panhandler's place, this excuse, like the others, begins to ring hollow.

Joshua Henkin is an editor of *Tikkun Magazine*.



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## Pestilent Mendicant

It has not escaped the attention of the press that there are large numbers of beggars about on the streets, with a high probability that these bums, panhandlers, bag ladies and drifters have no homes. Lately features about beggars have appeared in the *New York Times*, in *Time* and on the networks.

One striking feature of this sudden coverage is the tiny amount of attention given to the cause of the situation. It's as though cholera were sweeping the nation's major cities, and no one gave a thought as to why plague had suddenly struck. In the stories I've either read or watched about beggars lately the name of Ronald Reagan has barely been mentioned, as though no known connection existed between slashing funds for public housing, attacking welfare programs of one sort or another and the consequent effect on the targets of these "outs." You would think that the homeless were born on the street or had dropped out of the sky.

A second remarkable quality of these stories is the tremendous hostility expressed toward the homeless. It comes from both those being interviewed—who are almost always people being asked why they give or do not give money, never the homeless themselves—and some reporters and editors. Time after time the insinuation is made that the beggars are asking for money for drugs or alcohol, and not for such acts of self-improvement as would appeal to orderly middle-class minds. Of course it's true that many panhandlers are desperate for a drink or narcotic stimulus. But unless we are to assume that the age of Reagan has *per se* produced a rising graph of addiction, with no cause known to science, the reason can be found in increased desperation, anomie and misery.

Like many unpleasant media trends, this one appears to have originated with the *New York Times*, whose editors and reporters have to complete their journey to work by walking through the seedy Times Square area, soon to be purged of its riff-raff by developers cheered on, naturally, by the *New York Times*. On July 29 Fox Butterfield had a front-page story, "New Yorkers Growing Angry Over Aggressive Panhandlers." Butterfield talked to a total of one panhandler, mostly seeking his information elsewhere, from "experts" and people troubled as to whether they should give money or not. In this latter category was an unnamed Upper East Side shrink who said, "It provides a new target for my homicidal fantasies. The beggars are expressing hostility, not just asking for money. They want to force you to feel guilty."

On August 3, a *Times* editorial lamented the fact that the beggars of yesteryear—"the legless man propelling himself on a little wheeled platform and the sightless man asking for help to buy a seeing eye dog"—were being replaced by a more aggressive: "Unlike the legless and sightless, who merely shook their tin cups, the new beggars speak right up. 'Give me a quarter,' they order, or 'Help me out, lady.'" There was a real note of plaintive nostalgia, as though the old-style beggars—man on platform, man in need of dog—belonged to some ordered universe now gone. They'll probably show up in wax soon at the Museum of Modern Art.

Later in August the networks picked up the theme, with NBC and CBS both doing stories on August 29. The latter's report was particularly sickening. The greatest victims

## ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



of the "beggars" appeared to be the "working people of America" (probably the first time in years this group has received much sympathy from CBS), for whom "to give or not to give is becoming a daily dilemma." One panhandler CBS spoke of, named Noreen, "used to have a job. But now she begs because it's more profitable. She can make as much as \$200 a day." The correspondent, Harold Dow, also spoke to Mayor Ed Koch, whom the media cites incessantly on this issue. Koch told viewers that "when you give to the average panhandler you're simply feeding their addiction which is generally drugs or booze." Koch also claims that the giving of money to panhandlers is the ultimate cause of homelessness, as doing so only encourages them. Or, as CBS summed up his views, "begging begets begging." (The city of New York, under Koch's inspired leadership, will soon be spending money to put up signs telling people not to give money to beggars but to donate to charity instead.) Dow appeared sympathetic to this argument, closing the report by saying that Americans are now wondering "whether by giving they are contributing to the growing flock of beggars on America's streets."

NBC's marginally better report, by Cassandra Clayton, at least pointed out that "advocates for the poor argue there must be national solutions to problems such as lack of low-income housing and drug addiction." But Clayton also displayed a noticeable lack of sympathy, saying, "There are beggars on the subways. Beggars opening back doors. Beggars with children prey on public sympathy. Those who pretend to collect for charity prey on public trust." She also gave the odious Koch his say, as well as a number of hostile pedestrians ("They

looked just as healthy as me"). As the other reports mentioned above, the difficult word "Reagan" did not appear in Clayton's report.

Finally, *Time* attacked the topic in a cover story on September 5. Koch was once again given plenty of space to express his views (viz., you'd have to be crazy to give money to beggars). Splenetic yuppies were also given plenty of space, alongside much detail about the brazen scams carried out by panhandlers, thereby contributing to the theme that homeless people are pulling a fast one on the public. *Time* did point out that the federal housing budget has been cut from \$33 billion to \$13 billion in the past eight years (though here again the word "Reagan" was not mentioned, leaving it unclear why the funds had fallen so sharply) and the magazine did talk to some people, such as Jonathan Kozol, more sympathetic to the homeless. But overall the story was another case of blame the victim.

What we are seeing here is phase two of the onslaught on the possibility of urban reform. The mid-'70s crisis in the U.S. economy—in fact, the end of the long postwar boom—spawned the first neo-conservative attack on the efficiency of government as solver of social crisis. The '60s programs, meager though they were in many cases, came under abuse and assault. The result—in terms of regulating the middle-class social conscience—was that both major parties held their conventions this year in cities—Atlanta and New Orleans—distinguished by vast, poor, inner-city black populations, and barely found time to mention the fact or have it pointed out for them by the press massed in attendance.

Now comes an attack on the consequences of giving up on urban reform, consequences easily observed in Los Angeles

gangs or the beggars of Times Square. Having said in the '70s that it's useless to throw money at the problem or the social level, the press now says don't throw money at the problem or the individual level, either. An instructive parallel here is the reaction in both Elizabethan and Victorian England to the beggars created by, respectively, the enclosures of public lands and the rigors of 19th-century industrialization. Then, too, you find a similar fascination with the shifty panhandlers' techniques, and a similar hatred, with the ideological forebears of Koch preaching the gospel of contempt and the virtues of the stocks or transportation to Botany Bay.

## Adventures in the Peace Trade

On August 30 six Customs Service agents raided the Madison, Wis., house of Leonard Cizewski, director of Trade for Peace. They were prompted into action by Citizens for Reagan, based in Washington, D.C., who had complained that the group's activities were a violation of the Reagan-imposed trade embargo against Nicaragua. The agents searched the house and seized stamps, coffee, paintings and records from Nicaragua as well as business records and personal papers of Cizewski's. The U.S. Attorney's office in Madison is now deciding whether to prosecute Cizewski and other Trade for Peace members. Penalties upon conviction would include 10 years in jail and fines of up to \$50,000.

Trade for Peace is a small group that started up operations May 2, 1985, the day after Reagan declared the embargo. Since then they've sold about \$3,000 worth of goods, mostly mint-condition postage stamps, green coffee and crafts. These dangerous activities caused the Justice Department to act with far greater speed than they ever did in the case of contras being trained in the U.S., which was a clear violation of the new trading act.

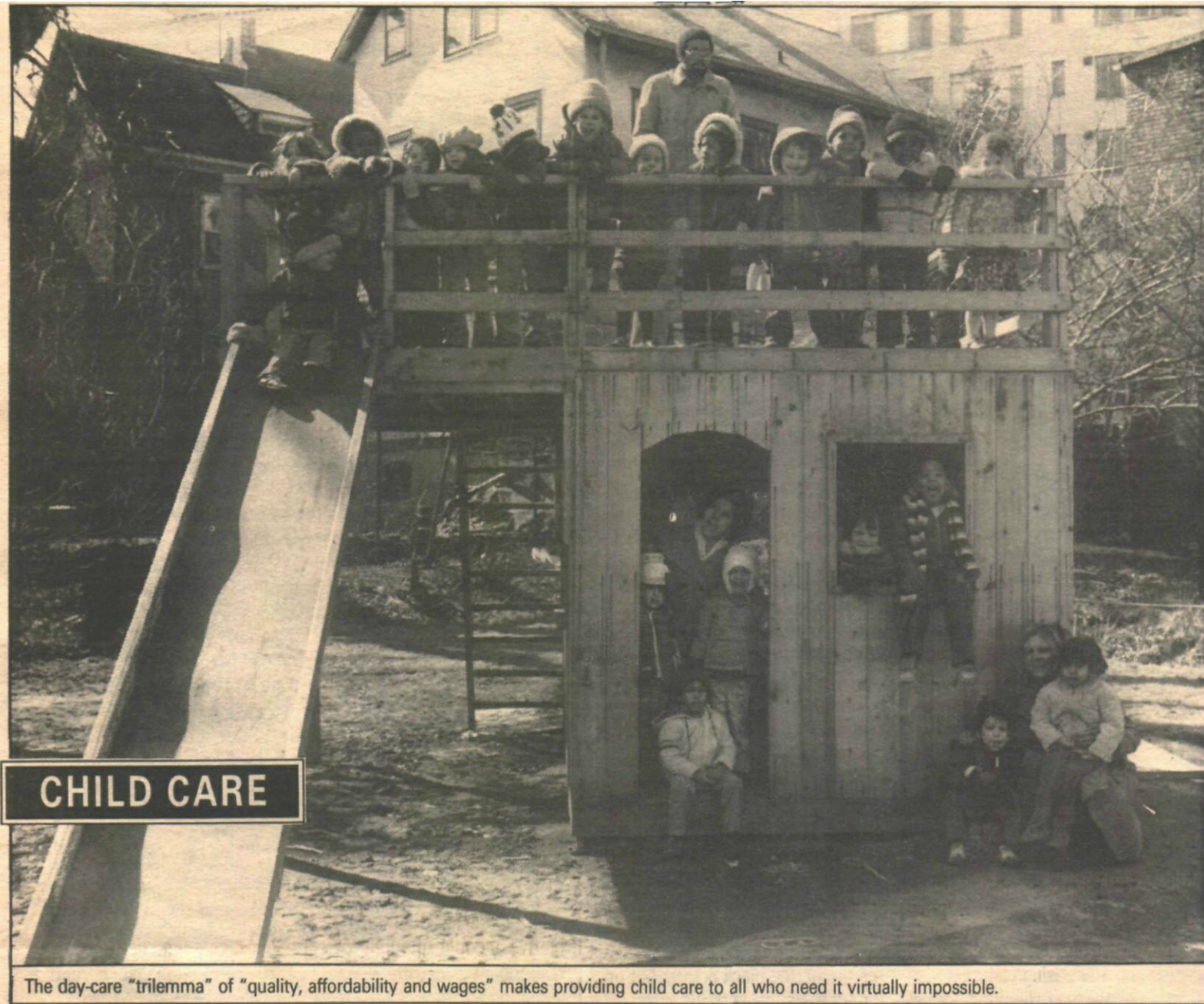
According to Cizewski, "We've never hidden our activities. The embargo is immoral—it's a war on the civilian population." He also said that he believed his group's activities were protected, "since the World Court ruled that the embargo was illegal." Most people remember the World court's July 1986 ruling that the mining of Nicaragua's harbors was illegal, but the court also held that the embargo was illegal and ordered the U.S. to pay reparations. Nicaragua recently filed a claim for \$12.2 billion in war damages, of which \$325.4 million was calculated to have resulted from the embargo.

The court has already heard from Nicaragua, and has ordered the U.S. to respond to its claim. According to David Whippman, a lawyer with Reichler, Applebaum and Whippman, the Washington-based law firm that represents the Nicaraguan government in some of its affairs, "I think it's safe to say that the U.S. won't respond," a fair assumption as the Reagan administration has always denied the court's right to hear the case.

Regardless of whether the U.S. responds or not, the court will issue a ruling, probably sometime in 1989. Not surprisingly, the status of the suit and Nicaragua's claim for reparations has gone largely unreported by the American media.

This column was prepared with the help of Ken Silverstein.





## CHILD CARE

The day-care "trilemma" of "quality, affordability and wages" makes providing child care to all who need it virtually impossible.

State Executive Office of Human Services. "That's why we started the voucher program," Adlin explains.

The voucher system allows mothers in the ET program to take their voucher and find their own licensed day-care provider, instead of waiting for a contracted slot to open up. While they pay the same sliding scale fee as families in the contracted system, mothers with a voucher do not have to wait long or settle for child care outside of their community.

Deprosse explains the imbalance by saying that "it's easier to sell day care to get women off welfare than to convince the legislature to provide help to working poor people." Yet the accessibility problem, explains Andrea Genser, goes beyond a limited number of contracted slots, far below the level of demand. Genser, who is director of the Child Care Resource Center in the Boston area, says that even though supply is below the demand for child care across the board, the day-care industry finds it hard to expand.

**A dilemma and a half:** Many point to a shortage of day-care teachers as a key factor preventing expansion. People have shied away from working in day care, according to Genser, due to the "low salaries, poor working conditions, and poor public perception of day-care teachers." Along with this teacher shortage is a lack of experienced day-care center managers willing to work for low salaries who can deal with the headaches of expansion: finding new space, zoning changes, understaffing.

The shortage of caretakers is one leg of what some call the day-care "trilemma": quality, affordability, wages. Improving one leg of the triangle is likely to threaten gains made elsewhere. For example, "if people really work hard to raise wages, then you have to charge parents more," says Genser. "Child care is one issue where everything is interconnected," she adds, "you have to work on all of those pieces at once."

Massachusetts is a leader in day-care provision among the states. Yet even there imbalances, shortages and high costs cause many parents—especially low-income working parents—continual headaches when it comes to caring for their kids. Politicians on the state and federal level, advocates say, need to approach day care not in a piecemeal fashion—seeing child care as a means to some other goal—but to tackle the interconnected issues together.

But Dale Fink says he is worried particularly with the Dukakis camp's "talk of child care as solving the welfare problem. If all the resources are put into families on welfare, you've still got millions of families with a child-care problem."

**Mark Feinberg** is a Boston-based freelance writer.

## Someone always loses in day-care shell game

By Mark Feinberg

**T**OO OFTEN DAY CARE IS STILL addressed as a way of getting people off welfare," says Dale Fink, project associate of Wellesley College's school-age child-care program. Politicians like Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, Fink adds, talk about day care in a way that leads to "an avoidance of child care as a child program."

Massachusetts' Employment Training (ET) program—which trains and helps mothers on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) get work—is one of presidential candidate Dukakis' favorite programs. As he campaigns, Dukakis can tell conservatives that he is getting people off the public dole, while he can tell liberals he is helping poor women find dignity and self-sufficiency.

Dukakis and his political allies know that early ET-style programs showed that good, reliable day care was a necessary piece of what it took for AFDC mothers to succeed in getting a job. And so, with their "eyes on the prize," the Dukakis camp has been enthusiastically providing day-care money for these women.

**Up and down:** In three years Massachusetts has tripled the amount of money it spends on subsidizing day

care for AFDC mothers in the ET program. From \$11.4 million in 1985, state spending has risen to over \$35 million in 1988. While this is good news for the roughly 9,000 children of these AFDC mothers each year, there is a down side as well: not nearly as much money in proportional terms has gone to help low-income working parents.

While \$35 million is spent on the roughly 9,000 children subsidized through the ET program each year, \$90 million is all that goes to provide help for the remaining scores of thousands of low- and moderate-income families in the state. This \$90 million provides for 20,000 day-care slots, yet many thousands more families need help but do not know about the subsidies, are on waiting lists to receive them or do not believe they could get a space for their child near their home.

Critics point to this imbalance in day-care subsidy and call on Dukakis and the legislature to increase funding for low-income working parents. "They don't understand that working poor women are one inch away from welfare," explains Nancy Deprosse, who is a UAW District 65 organizer of day-care workers in Boston.

Focussing on getting mothers off AFDC is only one way legislators

avoid the central issues of child care. Amy Wilkins, who works in the child-care division of the Washington, D.C.-based Children's Defense Fund, reports that politicians interested in the nation's economic productivity and competitiveness on world markets see day care as a piece of an economic platform. Since the lack of child care is said to be the most reliable predictor of on-the-job stress and absenteeism among workers of either sex, these politicians support day care to make workers more productive.

Wilkins says that such piecemeal approaches to day care have resulted in imbalances in many states' day-care systems. She adds that the result of putting so much money into day care for mothers in ET-style programs is "that people on either side of it are left out." On the one side are poor mothers on AFDC who are not in an ET program; and on the other side are poor working parents.

**Working through problems:** These families who are "left out" in Massachusetts go into the "contracted" subsidy system. In this system, day-care centers contract with state agencies to provide a certain number of subsidized child-care slots. Families with an income under 70 percent of the state's median in-

come are eligible for these sliding-scale subsidized slots. In 1987 a family of three with an income of \$10,000 would pay \$13 per week for child care; they would pay \$23 with an income of \$16,000 and \$53.00 if the family's income is \$22,000. (The estimated cost of child care is about \$100 per week.)

"Affordability" and "accessibility" are the two important buzzwords in the child-care industry. Even with the state subsidies, many parents are unable to afford child care. But the problem Deprosse and others point to is accessibility: "There aren't enough slots for anybody," she says, but particularly for low-income working parents. Deprosse says that some centers have two-year waiting lists.

Phyllis Smith, a day-care supervisor at a Dorchester, day-care center, agrees that "day care is hard to get—especially for working parents." She sees her waiting list for contracted slots get as long as a year, and gets angry, frustrated calls from parents. Often children start kindergarten before their name comes to the top of the list, she says.

"There has always been a long waiting list for contracted slots," says Sheryl Adlin, who directs the Day Care Policy Unit in Dukakis'



## Lesbian and gay film festival experiments with feeling

By Laura Flanders

**T**HIS FESTIVAL BREAKS ALL THE rules," says Sarah Schulman, co-curator of the Second Annual New York City Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival. "We've brought in a popular audience, we pay the filmmakers the highest rate going, and we have an impact on the national level."

In some parts of the country, "lesbian and gay" is experimental enough; in others, just the word "experimental" gets movie-goers edgy. But last year the Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival attracted more than 2,000 people in New York, making it the largest experimental film event in the city. The show then travelled to more than 10 cities in the U.S. and three in Europe. The loyalty and supportiveness of the gay and lesbian community is certainly one reason for the festival's success. As Schulman puts it, "Gays will support any work that's gay—they're not conservative that way." But there is more to the festival than that.

Unlike some of the early feminist filmmakers, the directors included in the Lesbian and Gay Film Festival resist the temptation to amass evidence of homosexual exclusion in traditional culture. Nor do they simply focus on detailing a chronology of unrecognized homosexual participation.

**Emotional connection:** At its worst, the festival is a fantasy-field for acting out gay obsessions with scant concern for the viewers' comprehension, or their pleasure. But at its best, the series (subtitled "A Queer Sort of Film") is a festival of self-inscription, less interested in critiquing the dominant ideology than in realizing an emotional connection between the audience and the film and between the filmmaker and the product.

The series' most didactic work, *A.I.D.S.C.R.E.A.M.*, is an examination of AIDS fear and the desexualization of homosexuality and gay identity. The film voices the typical questions—"Are we afraid to be gay?" and "Is AIDS due to relocate gay male sexuality in the prison cell and the hospital?" But using a single masked male image intercut with violent mass media snatches, filmmaker Jerry Tartaglia screams his personal fear and anger. Emotionally affecting, yet succinctly convincing, *A.I.D.S.C.R.E.A.M.* is an experiment in show and tell that teaches through passion as much as through content.

A similar feat is achieved by the films that deal with self-documentation. Jim Hubbard's *Stop the Movie*

(*Cruising*) is a portion of a mammoth work covering gay and lesbian demonstrations over the last decade. The hand-processed Super-8 film flickers, tantalizingly obscuring the demonstration scenes, emphasizing the effort involved in seeing these particular images. Hubbard's message is in his method, laborious and

### FILM

loving, recording a history that may only exist today on this film. "No more shit," mouth the demonstrators of almost 10 years ago. The work is silent—sound would be almost unbearable.

The opening frame of Jack Walsh's long *Working Class Chronicle* quotes Walter Benjamin: "Only a redeemed mankind has its past because it is citable in all its moments." A whimsical exercise in reconstructing a personal history, Walsh's film is fascinated by emptiness: the barren streets and empty porches of his home town; the evasive Catholic Church commentaries that accompany each stage of his life; and the hundreds of one-dimensional postcards and advertising pictures.

Though the men's films are predominantly about self-depiction, the women's films selected for the festival tend to be more assertive. There are fewer contributions by women (due not to selection, but to lack of submissions), but those that there are are among the most technically well crafted and creatively significant of the festival.

Abigail Child's *Mayhem* takes on the film noir genre and feeds it through the director's sensibility. Women in polka dots and men in pinstripes act out a drama that seems to tell a story of intrigue and torture, but never quite comes to a conclusion. Caught somewhere between fascination and contempt for

**In difficult times for gay culture and experimental films, the second annual Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival is a triumph of bridge-building as well as rule-breaking.**

the Hollywood genre, Child re-creates a '30s thriller: light obscures characters who pose in close proximity but never meet; collaged moments repeat for mounting tension as chase-music screeches in the background. The result is mysterious and fun, (and fun is something experimental film of any variety could do with more of).

**Losing momentum:** The least successful films in the festival ride on the merits of their subject matter. *All Women Are Equal*, an inadequately cut documentary on an aging London transvestite, is one of these. Marguerite Paris' hand-held Super-8 delicately focusses on Paul/a's immaculately powdered skin and perfectly poised coffee spoon, but in her determination to let her subject speak for herself unedited, the filmmaker loses momentum.

A similar fate befalls Canadian director John Greyson's attempted tribute to Simon Nkoli, a South African black gay activist about to stand trial for treason. *A Maffie Called Simon* is probably the only film of its kind, dealing with homosexuality in South Africa; yet, curiously, the film focuses not on the black activist but on the white journalist trying to tell his story. Strong gay content doesn't compensate for stilted performances and stiff editing, and the audience emerges astonishingly unmoved.

In contrast, *Walkin' With M*, a short film by Ruth Gumnit, is one of the most emotionally packed pieces of the festival. In a single take Gumnit allows her "special friend" to become both object and subject of the shadowy three-minute film. When "M" finally looks into the camera, her face entirely taking over the frame, the viewer is almost embarrassed by her gaze.

"Our intent is to give a context to gay work, to show the work in its proper surroundings," says Sarah Schulman, who co-curated the show with filmmaker Jim Hubbard. The festival is neither geared exclusively to the typically elitist "arts" community, nor just to gays who want to see easy "gay" content. "The result," says Schulman, "has been that large groups of people have found that they can have an emotional connection to the work." At a time when homosexual culture is increasingly under attack for being insufficiently regulated, and experimental film is losing viewers unable to fathom the feeling in the form, the Second Annual Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival is a triumph of bridge-building as well as rule-breaking. ■  
Laura Flanders is a freelance journalist living in New York.

By Pat Aufderheide

## Unplugging the Plugged-In Kids

Rambo made it official. For years, kids' TV programming has flourished in a close alliance with toys. Toy companies, like Mattel with He-Man, even made TV shows to match their products; public pressure to stop it ran into regulatory snarls in the Reagan administration. But now toy companies are leery, after watching Rambo go down in flames. A TV series based on the movie character went straight to the bottom of the ratings, and Rambo toys—complete with rocket-launcher—haven't moved out of the stores. It's a trend: *Jem*, a doll-based TV show, has also bombed, while *Thundercats* did well but the toys never caught on.

## That's No Ad, It's Underwriting

"AT&T: The Right Choice." Yes, you saw it on public TV. Cash-poor public TV has once again revamped its rules for how corporate sponsors can identify themselves. In a move that was supposed to "de-commercialize" public TV's look, program service PBS now permits mascots (hello, Exxon's tiger), corporate theme music, "generic" employees and "informercials" that appear at the beginning and end of a program. Not happy are commercial broadcasters, who see competition looming from a supposedly non-commercial competitor. Stations still set their own rules; on some, corporations air the same ads that run on commercial TV.

## Fox TV Guide

When Rupert Murdoch bought *TV Guide* from Walter Annenberg in August, the most influential mass publication on television fell to the man whose corporation also runs the Fox TV network and several TV stations. The possibility that Murdoch's imperial interests might affect *TV Guide*'s coverage has scattered advertisers and has sent thrills up the spines of competitors. (It's been many years since anyone dared launch a rival to the 17 million circulation—second highest in the nation—magazine in the U.S.) Readers of serious reporting on TV are also watching closely. Walter Annenberg is Reagan's best buddy, but his magazine regularly reported independently and responsibly on TV. Famed for launching the investigation of the CBS documentary on Vietnam *The Uncounted Enemy*, the magazine also published more recently a definitive account of public TV's problems. One-time network correspondent Liz Trotta also published in the *Guide* last February a revealing account of broadcast bias called "Why the Network Didn't Want My Exclusive on Grenada." She charged that "executive producers want sensational pictures, and their threshold for boredom is low," and that a news elite fostered a "smart-ass school of journalism that views the world from the insulated premises of country houses, fancy restaurants and chauffeured limousines." Let's see whether network owner Murdoch wants articles like that in his new acquisition. And if not, let's see if any of the eager competitors wants to fill that gap.

## No, Let Me Guess

First, the good news: blacks and other minorities are employed in substantial numbers in radio and TV newsrooms, according to a Radio-TV News Directors Association study. And now the bad: disproportionately few minorities are employed in decision-making positions such as news director, assignment editor and executive producer. Why? The report concludes that "further research is needed."

## Racism on Public Access

Is the Ku Klux Klan coming to your television set? Probably, if you have cable access. And you may need to know what happened when the Klan and neo-Nazi groups tried to use public-access cable channels for racist messages in such places as the East Bay area in California; Cincinnati, Ohio; Pocatello, Idaho; and Austin, Texas. *Bigotry and Cable TV: Legal Issues and Community Responses* (National Institute against Prejudice and Violence, 525 W. Redwood, Baltimore, MD 20201), written by Bob Purvis, vice president of the National Institute, describes how these communities faced the challenge. At stake, charges Purvis, is public access as a First Amendment forum and, in the long run, the integrity of the First Amendment. He reminds those who abhor offering racism a public forum that "the real scope of free speech is only as broad as that which is, in fact, afforded the unpopular and the powerless." In the most optimistic cases he studied, citizens recognized controversy as an opportunity, and developed anti-racist coalitions and counter-programming. Ironically, it may be the Klan that finally puts long under-used public access in the spotlight.

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## Heavy Drinking: The Myth of Alcoholism as a Disease

By Herbert Fingarette  
University of California Press,  
166 pp., \$16.95

By Lawrence Swaim

ONE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN'S big issues will probably be allegations that top aides to George Bush were involved in high-level drug-running, with Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) acting as point man. Kerry will probably release information piecemeal as the campaign progresses, and will seek to do so in a way that will make it difficult for the mainstream press to ignore. Along with revelations about drug-running, however, will come renewed questions about the role of addictions in American life.

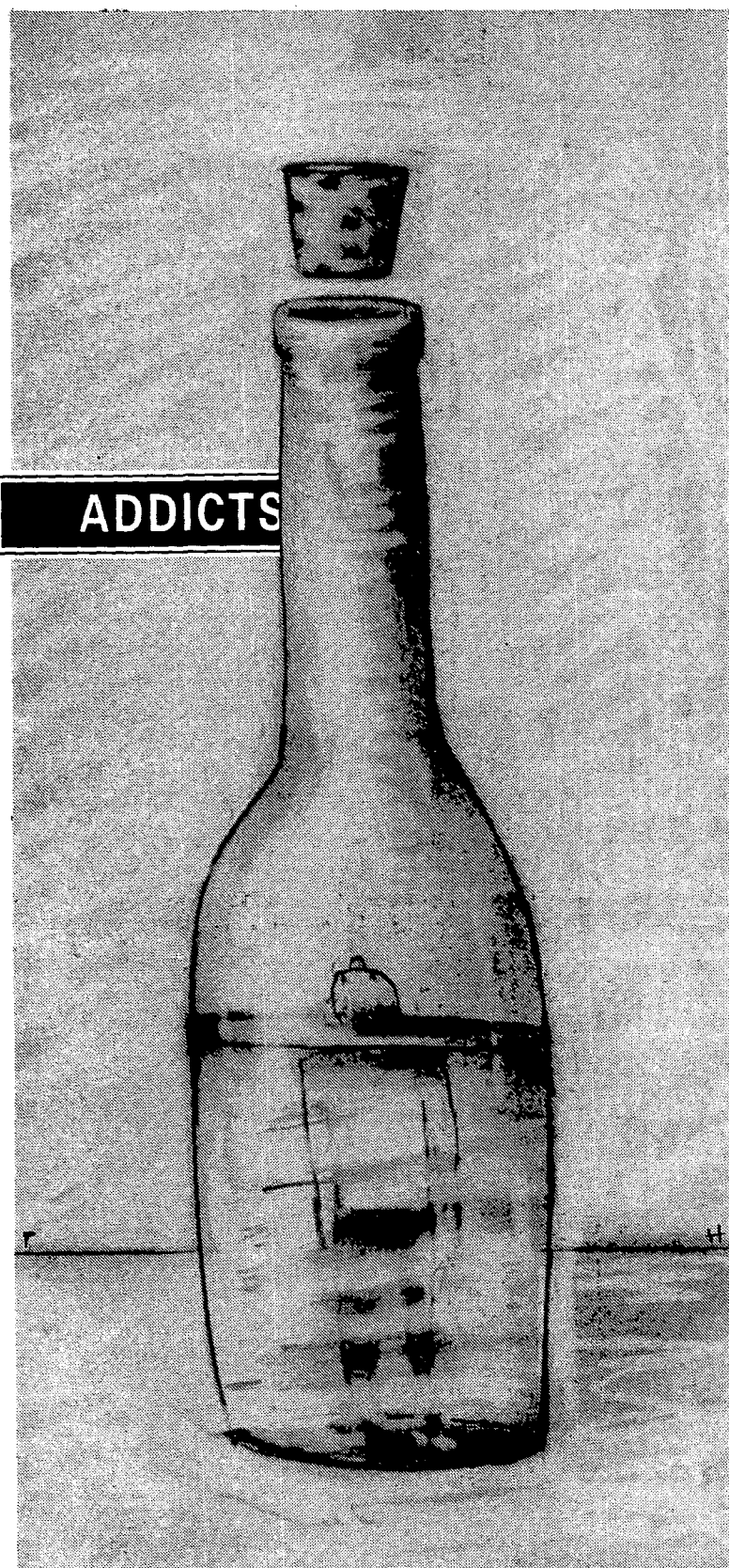
The increasing politicization of addictions is also reflected in accelerating attempts by insurance companies and carriers to deny benefits to recovering alcoholics, as well as a recent Supreme Court decision upholding the Veterans Administration's contention that alcoholism is a disability caused by "willful misconduct" rather than a disease. In general, political conservatives seem to favor the "willful misconduct" argument, with political progressives tending to defend the disease concept or remaining aloof from the conflict.

**High points:** Perhaps the most controversial book attacking the disease concept has been Herbert Fingarette's *Heavy Drinking: The Myth of Alcoholism as a Disease*. In addition to his attacks on the disease concept of alcoholism, addiction researcher Fingarette is also noted for his pronounced hostility to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

Roughly speaking, Fingarette's argument boils down to a few main points: the disease concept of alcoholism is fraudulent because there is no single cause of alcoholism; there is a benign conspiracy to maintain this disease concept in government and treatment circles, in which recovering alcoholics play a central role; alcoholics do not really lose control of their drinking, as previously thought, so they can be gradually trained to moderate; thus most treatment centers—and programs such as AA—are operating on false premises, and as such are to some extent reprehensible. Symbolic of his attack on the disease concept, Fingarette even eschews the term "alcoholism," preferring instead the rather lifeless phrase "heavy drinking."

Fingarette's argument is strangely unbalanced, as though it were part of a much larger dispute the roots of which are somewhat more personal than scientific. It is probably true that there are drinkers who can learn to moderate their drinking. But

# Addictions American style: a double shot of trouble



what about those drinkers who experience a progressive loss of control? Would not those people benefit from an abstinence-oriented, rather than a control-oriented, program?

Fingarette hints that this might be true, yet sidesteps the issue in an attempt to avoid the appearance of capitulation to the disease concept. But it is not necessary to believe that alcoholism is a disease to advocate abstinence in certain cases. And in any case, while there may be many chronic heavy drinkers who can learn how to control their drinking, there are many who cannot—and it is precisely these people who kill on the highway, beat up their wives, and set up dysfunctional systems within their families.

**The name game:** Of course, many of Fingarette's criticisms of the disease concept are well-taken. There is some evidence that early AA leaders encouraged the idea because they wanted the support of top medical and mental health professionals, and the concept of alcoholism as a disease maintained a philosophical connection to the medical model. Yet expressions such as "problem drinking" and "alcohol dependence syndrome" do not reflect the proven importance of genetic predilection.

So the word "disease," while it is unsatisfactory, is probably still the most descriptive—as long as it is updated to mean a primarily psychological and social pathology, and less a genetic and physiological one.

one.

Another of Fingarette's deserving targets are over-priced treatment centers that cater to the current sense of addictions as an expensive new upper-middle-class fad. He is also right to emphasize the social context of addictive behavior. It is too bad, then, that he ignores certain cultural tendencies specific to American civilization that seem to be acted out in addictive and compulsive behavior. (At least one researcher—E.M. Jellinek, in his pivotal *The Disease Concept of Alcoholism*—thought he observed a specifically American form of chronic alcoholism.) Both American addictions and American theories about them are acted out in an environment in which political power and powerlessness—play an important role.

Conservatives will probably use the attack on the disease concept as

## The gut issue for researcher Fingarette is first and always the issue of control, to which he returns time and again.

a pretext for opposing benefits and recovery programs for alcoholics, as part of their overall opposition to social services. And if the "willful misconduct" idea gains momentum they will also probably use it to attack government support for addiction and drug rehabilitation programs where they are needed most—in the black, Latino and poor communities.

**Political passivity:** It is too bad, also, that Fingarette did not do a better job of researching the shortcomings of AA and related 12-step programs. In the past, one of the great hidden scandals of AA and Narcotics Anonymous has been the extent to which its adherents have sometimes encouraged the mentally ill not to take appropriate psychotropic medication, a practice that—while changing now—has caused dozens of suicides and devastated countless lives.

Abuse of the sponsor system is also widespread in AA, with some males using the emotional vulnerability of newly-sober females in a sexually abusive way. And since 12-step programs assert that individuals should concentrate only on changing themselves, they promote a kind of political passivity that is disturbing to radicals in AA. (Both

Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, co-founders of AA, were political conservatives.) Finally, although there are a variety of meetings in urban areas—including gay and humanist meetings—AA in rural areas often tends to project an anti-intellectual orientation.

But instead of exposing these very real failings, Fingarette resorts to name-calling and misinformation. (It is not true, for example, that AA is simply a continuation of the temperance crusade; AA has always opposed prohibition.)

What really seems to make Fingarette angry is the loss of power experienced by treatment and research professionals. The post-war years have not been kind to such professionals. Psychotherapy has not worked as well as its founders assumed it would, and it has a miserable record with alcoholics. Feminists have assailed male therapists as agents of social control. An array of psychotropic medications have proven to be vastly more helpful in dealing with mental illness than talk therapy. And a wild assortment of gurus in the self-help and human potential movements have arisen to challenge the right of the psychotherapist to be the new secular priest.

AA and the related 12-step programs have been another blow. To begin with, they get visible results: everybody knows someone who has been helped by AA, whereas alcoholics who have been helped by psychotherapists are less obvious. Since 12-step programs are based on peer counselling in small groups, those active in them do not need to build up a dependency relationship to a single person, as can happen with a psychotherapist. Finally—and perhaps most threateningly—such programs are free. (And those recovering alcoholics who work as alcoholism counsellors are usually willing to work for less than professionals with degrees.)

This underlying conflict—which Fingarette alludes to with a certain suppressed anger—is a clue to the contradictory way in which he marshals his evidence, citing studies and concepts when they are useful to a particular argument, while violently attacking them in other parts of his book. For example, Fingarette repeatedly denies that alcoholics experience any true loss of control when they drink, yet he acknowledges that heavy drinkers have "a puzzlingly inconsistent ability to manage their drinking." Similarly, he denies that alcoholics experience any real craving for alcohol—since "there is no independent way of deciding whether a craving is or isn't present," craving must be just "another myth."

**Getting to control:** Fingarette also ignores the new model for addictions that has arisen in much popular writing, and the work of some psychologists. This new model

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emphasizes the importance of denial, dysfunctional families and the role of co-dependents. It views alcoholism and other addictions as systems that require many people to work, and which may have some relativity to the larger society and its values. But in this model, recovery also requires one to deal extensively with feelings, commitments and moral values—all things that literalists like Fingarette would consider unscientific and thus invalid.

So perhaps it is not so surprising that the gut issue for Fingarette is first and always the issue of control, to which he returns time and again. Fingarette is obsessed by the proven ability of many diagnosed alcoholics and problem drinkers to control their drinking in the short run. Many of his ideas are simply restatements of the idea that this short-term con-

trol ought to theoretically be amenable to some kind of long-range program.

But Fingarette may be missing the entire point about control, which is that control is always a short-term enterprise and that control itself can be damaging. Recovering alcoholics who have practiced controlled drinking for relatively long periods report that the tension generated tends to lead sooner or later to an explosion of uncontrolled periodic drinking; and that even when such controlled drinking is nominally successful, the energy necessary to control it tends to lead to obsessive thinking about alcohol.

Besides, what good does it do to control one's intake if one becomes violent after drinking only a small amount? Alcoholism is not just a matter of intake, but of behavior

after ingestion.

To meet these objections, Fingarette suggests that we simply lower our standards during those periods when heavy drinkers are being taught how to control their drinking. One looks for a "major reduction in the number of drinking days a month, or a marked reduction in days off the job, or of weeks in the hospital, or of fights or squabbles with others." One wonders how successful controlled drinking could be if it is causing subjects to spend weeks in the hospital, and one wonders how many other people the controlled drinker will be allowed to put in the hospital before abstinence is suggested as a more responsible alternative.

Fingarette's book is a pure expression of certain fundamentally patriarchal attitudes in traditional

medicine. The male definition of medicine in the past—and of life generally—has been the extent to which the individual can control nature and impose a pattern upon chaos. Fingarette's model clearly reflects this outlook, returning to the old psychotherapeutic schema in which the therapist struggles manfully with the client to control his drinking, generating a guilt-ridden dependency and perhaps becoming yet another co-dependent in the alcoholic's life.

A new model has arisen, however, in which the subject no longer struggles to control alcohol, but declares his or her powerlessness over it, removing the control by removing the alcohol—and using the resulting psychic dislocation as the opportunity to design a new and less controlling way of life. This admission of

powerlessness and the desire to stop controlling has a paradoxical and distinctly feminine feeling to it, and Fingarette's book projects a strong concern with the loss of the older patriarchal values of male-dominated science.

It also reflects the very tangible loss of power suffered by professionals who are no longer trusted by the very alcoholics about whom they are supposed to be so well informed. In this sense—and to the extent that they present service and spirituality as more important than money or power—AA and the other 12-step programs are culturally radical new institutions that are permanently changing the way we view not only addictions, but also issues of control, power and powerlessness. ■

Lawrence Swaim is a writer living in Massachusetts.

### Writin' is Fightin': Thirty Seven Years of Boxing on Paper

By Ishmael Reed  
Atheneum, 181 pp., \$18.95

By Fred Little

*I think that a certain amount of philosophical skepticism is necessary, and so regardless of the criticisms I receive from the left, the right and the middle, I think it's important to maintain a prolific writing jab, as long as my literary legs hold up, because even during these bland and yuppie times, there are issues worth fighting about.*

—Ishmael Reed

*At present, in many of the martial arts, and especially archery, there is too much concern about appearance, and not much concern about substance. That kind of martial art is useless in critical moments.*

—Miyamoto Musashi

**W**HILE POSTMODERNISTS OF various stripes are perched at their word processors composing essays on such burning matters as the reification of hegemonic discourse and the relational significance of the juxtaposition of formal elements in contemporary fiction, Ishmael Reed is out there doing road work, working the heavy bag, sparring; staying in shape for the next 15-rounder. He compares his style with that of Larry Holmes, so be forewarned: Ishmael Reed *knows* that the political is personal, and anybody who gets too close is likely to get the same thumb in the eye that Holmes once gave Ernie Shavers in a title fight. Maybe it wasn't pretty, but Larry Holmes carried home the champion's belt that night.

**Feckless eyeballing:** Many readers of Reed's new collection will turn directly to "Stephen Spielberg Plays Howard Beach" to get the latest in the long-running literary feud between Reed and the Alice Walker tag-team. For my money, *Reckless Eyeballing*, the novel that set off this commotion, was a more subtle and complex satire than any of Reed's

## Ishmael Reed still packs a punch

antagonists will allow; and anyone simple-minded enough to (mis)represent that work as a mere personal attack on Alice Walker or women's rights is working in the same realm as the Chicago aldermen who arrested a portrait of late Mayor Harold Washington in drag. But they got

their shots in and Ishmael uses this occasion to demonstrate some solid inside counterpunching. A stiff verbal jab, some personal invective to the ribs, followed by a solid combination of verifiable facts to the head. Elegant? No, but undeniably on target.

The vitriolic Ishmael Reed weighs in again with *Writin' is Fightin'*.



Gloria Steinem characterized Walker's *The Color Purple* as "truth-telling." Will the *Village Voice* and *Ms. Magazine*, which provided the platforms for the most vitriolic attacks on Reed, respond to this "truth-telling" by correcting the "perverse misogyny" behind the total lack of "aggressive black women" in their corporate or senior staff positions? Only time will tell. But I wouldn't bet

### ESSAYS

that Stephen Spielberg, who has made a career of high-production-value pandering to the lowest level of popular Anglo tastes, is likely to change his m.o. at this point.

Fortunately, Reed knows his way around his craft well enough to realize that while counterpunching is a necessary skill, it's better to make your openings and get off a few good shots than to trade blows. In "300 Years of 1984," by using race, rather than geopolitics, as his point of departure, he does a jiu-jitsu flip on the Cold-War hate-mongering that often seems to be the only skill of neoconservative public policy pimps like Jeane Kirkpatrick and Norman Podhoretz. The technique may be outside the rules of boxing, but the rules of the ring don't apply when the game is life and death.

**Reed knows his craft well enough to realize that it's better to make your openings and get off a few good shots than to trade blows.**

**Killer illiteracy:** And in an era when our local institutions—churches, schools, PTAs, volunteer fire departments and annual block parties—are in a state of advanced decay across the entire economic spectrum, the ways in which the mass media portray us to one another are matters of life and death.

Reed makes this clear in "Hyped or Hip," "How the Afrikaners Can Hold On" and "Killer Illiteracy."

When we fail to include a Chester Hymes in the detective fiction pantheon of Hammett, Chandler and MacDonald; when we allow our organs of culture to acquiesce to the sound and video trickery that has constituted the sum and substance of the Reagan civil rights program; when we allow a generation to grow up unable to read anything more substantive than the credits on made-for-TV slasher and cheesecake extravaganzas, we set ourselves up to take the big fall.

Don't get me wrong. There's more to this book than rough business and clinches in the corner. Reed's portrait of the playwright August Wilson (*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*) is an example of the kind of friendly but still serious sparring that trained professionals can engage in—the point is to assist your partner by showing him his openings, rather than simply take him out.

Along the way, another point is made: there's more to the work than getting the words on the page. A writer needs a support network as surely as a fighter needs a good trainer, manager, sparring partner and a ring to work in.

In pieces like "America: The Multinational Society," "In Opposition—Which State," "Soyinka Among the Monoculturalists" and "An Evening in Radcliffe Yard," one theme recurs time and again: just as a combination of ignorance, malice and double-talk kept the great Jack Johnson out of the ring in the early part of this century, the same forces work to keep alternative voices out of our bookstores, libraries and classrooms today.

But this fight is about more than a belt and a title. It's about who we are, who our children will be and whether they're taught to use their hands on the typewriter or on each other. They'll choose the possibilities we show them. Now tell the truth: have you seen mention of this book before now? ■

Fred Little writes frequently for *In These Times*.



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## Panda

Continued from page 24

officials announced the recovery of 146 panda pelts, representing an estimated 15 percent of the wild panda population.

The concern over short-term loans was two-fold: first, that, as the Chinese scrambled to keep up with loan requests, there was more and more incentive to disrupt captive breeding programs and send potential breeders abroad; and, secondly, that there was equally great incentive to take more pandas from the wild.

As economic benefits seemed to supercede conservationist concerns, political pandering for pandas both in China and this country further complicated the issue. Requests for special panda loans have come from prominent American politicians, including Jimmy Carter, and both sides have been eager for the prestige and profits of promoting China's "good will ambassadors."

Despite the concern and controversy over panda loans, the Chinese action took the international conservation community and the loan critics by surprise. While many feel that a panda ban may be necessary to stop the uncontrolled stampede for short-term loans, few believe that a total and permanent ban would be the best solution to the problem.

"This was not the intent of anything we've done," said Ed Schmitt, chairman of the AAZPA's Giant Panda Task Force and pointman for the association's panda policy. "If a loan program were regulated properly, it could be very beneficial to the panda in captivity and in the wild."

**Subtle retaliation:** AAZPA president, Ron Forman agrees. "Given a choice between a

ban on loans and continued exploitation," he said, "we would prefer the ban. But the pandas have a tremendous story to tell, and they can act as an ambassador for other endangered species." Forman, zoo institutions and conservationists all hope that continued discussions between the Chinese and officials in this country can lead to a more structured and balanced loan policy.

There is an additional concern that the Chinese action was taken as a subtle retaliation for criticism generated by the lawsuit and controversy in the U.S. A moratorium on panda imports was imposed by the Fish and Wildlife Service after last May's lawsuit, and some worry that the Chinese may be responding with a tit-for-tat policy that punishes American zoos for the embarrassing controversy.

"We are hoping that they are looking at this internationally," said Forman of the AAZPA, and that they aren't just pointing a finger at U.S. zoos. "A ban on U.S. loans still doesn't address the problem," said Don Reid, a University of Calgary zoologist who spent two and a half years working with pandas in China. While the U.S. zoos have been the biggest market, there have been at least eight loans to zoos outside the U.S. in recent years.

The Chinese haven't made the details of their new policy known to the U.S. government or to relevant zoos and associations. While unable to offer critical clarification, Xu Jiaxian, cultural counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, says that he believes the ban is temporary. He personally thinks that it should include all foreign countries, not just the U.S. "You have opposition in this country to the import of pandas," he said, "and stopped issuing licenses in order

to consider the situation. Both of us will have to study, and come up with a more perfect panda policy."

**Survival of the species:** Ken Cook of the World Wildlife Fund was as surprised as everybody else by the Chinese action, but says that the fund would "not be heart-broken" if there were no more short-term loans. "They're not worth the risk," he said, "and the easiest and best thing to do was to call off all bets and re-evaluate the loans at another time."

The biggest potential losers in the panda battle thus far are those U.S. zoos with pending loan applications. In Atlanta zoo officials have been working for many months on what zoo director Dr. Terry Maple calls the "perfect panda loan proposal." Two Atlanta-bound pandas have already been chosen and approved for export from China. The new Chinese ban will not apply to the Atlanta pandas, said director Maple, and the only holdup is the ongoing moratorium imposed by the U.S. government.

"In Atlanta we were trying to create the model panda loan," insisted Maple, "to capture the hearts of Atlanta citizens, enlighten them, and to raise money for conservation. [Short-term loans] are a tremendously promising component of an overall conservation program and we want to demonstrate that it can be done well."

China's smiling bandit bear is a charmer, but panda passions pose both benefits and dangers to the bears. "We must be careful," said Maple, "and find ways to utilize the power of the animal for good. The charisma of the panda is the one thing that will save it." ■  
Alisa Joyce is a Washington, D.C.-based journalist who recently travelled to China.



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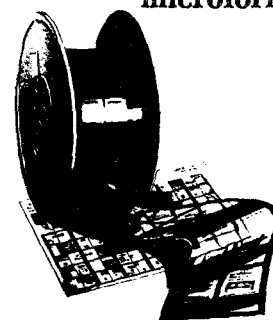
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## LIFE IN HELL

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☐ EVIL STEPPARENT  
☐ KICKED OUT OF HOUSE BEFORE 18 YEARS OF AGE  
☐ DAD BLOWS ALL THE MONEY ON THE LOTTERY  
☐ PARENT ON A DIET  
☐ PARENT ATTEMPTING TO QUIT SMOKING  
☐ REFRIGERATOR FULL OF YOGURT  
☐ HAVING A DORKY NAME  
☐ REALIZING YOU'RE NOT THE FAVORITE CHILD  
☐ FIRST CONFRONTATION WITH A CLOWN  
☐ PUNISHED FOR TELLING THE TRUTH  
☐ TOILET OVERFLOWING  
☐ FORCED TO KISS WARTY OLD RELATIVES  
☐ FORCED TO WEAR HAND-ME-DOWNS  
☐ FORCED TO PERFORM IN FRONT OF PARENTS' FRIENDS  
☐ BEING PUT TO BED WHEN NOT SLEEPY  
☐ PARENTS DRIVING TOO SLOWLY  
☐ RECEIVING UNDERWEAR FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY  
☐ SCRATCHY NEW SWEATER  
☐ BORING VACATION  
☐ BEING FAMILY SCAPEGOAT

☐ MOM READING YOUR SECRET DIARY  
☐ THROWING UP AT SCHOOL  
☐ INSUFFERABLE BROTHER  
☐ INSUFFERABLE SISTER  
☐ BEING TOLD TO SAY "THANK YOU" FOR THE 10,000TH TIME  
☐ BEING TOLD TO CLEAN YOUR ROOM FOR THE 10,000TH TIME  
☐ CLEANING YOUR ROOM  
☐ REPUBLICAN PARENTS  
☐ FORCED TO WEAR TOTALLY STUPID CLOTHES  
☐ FAVORITE TV SHOW CANCELED  
☐ DREAMING ABOUT HAVING NO CLOTHES AT SCHOOL  
☐ CLEANING OUT CAT BOX  
☐ PARENTS CALLING YOU BY EMBARRASSING NICKNAME IN FRONT OF FRIENDS  
☐ WETTING YOUR PANTS AT SCHOOL  
☐ BEING TATTLED ON  
☐ TATTILING ON SOMEONE AND HAVING IT BACKFIRE  
☐ FORCED TO EAT SPINACH  
☐ FORCED TO EAT BROCCOLI  
☐ PARENTS THREATENING TO SEND YOU TO MILITARY SCHOOL  
☐ MILITARY SCHOOL  
☐ SUMMER SCHOOL  
☐ SCHOOL  
☐ SUNDAY SCHOOL  
☐ DANCING SCHOOL  
☐ EARLY BEDTIME STRICTLY ENFORCED  
☐ NOT GETTING DESSERT BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T EAT YOUR VEGETABLES  
☐ GROUNDED

☐ ALLOWANCE CUT OFF  
☐ BEING TOLD NOT TO EAT SO FAST  
☐ BEING TOLD NOT TO CHEW WITH YOUR MOUTH OPEN  
☐ BEING TOLD TO SIT UP STRAIGHT  
☐ HOMEWORK  
☐ SOCKS AS PRESENTS  
☐ HANDKERCHIEF FOR BIRTHDAY  
☐ PARENTS TELLING YOU WHAT YOU WILL BE WHEN YOU GROW UP  
☐ LISTENING TO PARENTS FIGHT IN THE NEXT ROOM  
☐ LISTENING TO PARENTS FIGHT IN THE SAME ROOM  
☐ BEING HIT BY PARENT  
☐ BEING KICKED BY PARENT  
☐ SLAPPED BY PARENT  
☐ SPANKEED BY PARENT  
☐ BEATEN BY PARENT  
☐ BURNED BY PARENT  
☐ LOCKED IN CLOSET  
☐ TORTURED  
☐ SEXUALLY MOLESTED  
☐ GETTING LOST  
☐ BEING CALLED "BAD"  
☐ BEING CALLED "LAZY"  
☐ BEING CALLED "SELFISH"  
☐ MAKING YOUR MOM CRY  
☐ MEETING ANOTHER KID WITH YOUR NAME  
☐ BEING TOLD "YOU'RE JUST NOT TRYING"  
☐ BEING FORCED TO APOLOGIZE WHEN YOU DON'T MEAN IT  
☐ NOT BEING ALLOWED TO GO TO A SUMMER PARTY  
☐ BEING TOLD "I KNOW YOU COULD DO BETTER"  
☐ FIRST TIME SEEING DEAD DOG IN THE ROAD

☐ FIRST STARVING CHILD SEEN ON TV  
☐ FIRST ASSASSINATION SEEN ON TV  
☐ FIRST REALIZATION THAT DEATH IS PERMANENT  
☐ FIRST REALIZATION THAT DEATH IS INEVITABLE  
☐ FIRST REALIZATION THAT DEATH HAPPENS TO EVERYONE  
☐ FIRST REALIZATION THAT APPLIES TO YOU TOO  
☐ FIRST GHOST SEEN  
☐ BEING TREATED LIKE A BABY IN FRONT OF FRIENDS  
☐ BEING CHOSEN LAST FOR THE TEAM  
☐ NOT BEING INVITED TO A BIRTHDAY PARTY  
☐ FIRST BEE STING  
☐ FIRST BOOSTER SHOT  
☐ BEING FORBIDDEN TO PLAY WITH BAD KIDS  
☐ FEAR OF DOGS  
☐ FEAR OF VAMPIRES  
☐ FEAR OF ROBOTS  
☐ FEAR OF ALIENS  
☐ FEAR OF SHARKS  
☐ FEAR OF MONSTERS  
☐ FEAR OF BEARS  
☐ FEAR OF LIONS  
☐ FEAR OF PSYCHOPATHS  
☐ FEAR OF NUCLEAR WAR  
☐ FEAR OF DAD  
☐ CAUGHT SHOPLIFTING  
☐ BEING TOLD "YOU OUGHT TO BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF"  
☐ (FILL IN THE BLANK)  
☐ ONGOING NAMELESS DREAD

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# PANDA MONIUM

By Alisa Joyce

IT'S AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC SUPERSTAR in danger of being loved to death. China's giant panda is a cute, cuddly crowd-pleaser, an animal whose celebrity status has made it a box-office boom for U.S. zoos. But the panda is also a critically endangered species and profitable short-term panda loans to zoos in this country may be a thing of the past. Officials in China announced in September that giant pandas would no longer be exported for exhibition in the U.S.

The Chinese ban on panda exports comes amid growing controversy and criticism over short-term loans—a program dubbed “rent-a-panda” by critics. George Schaller of the New York Zoological Society, a highly respected panda expert who spent four years in China studying the beast, wrote recently that American zoos were involved in an “undisciplined scramble” for panda publicity and profits. In his most stinging criticism, he wrote that China was “exploiting its national treasure for mercenary goals.”

Much to the dismay and surprise of conservationists and zoo professionals, the Chinese seem to have taken Schaller's and other criticism to heart. The pandas were considered “good will ambassadors” by the Chinese, a widely recognized symbol of China and of endangered species. Loans to U.S. zoos were to be used as an educational device, to raise consciousness about the plight of the species and to raise money for conservation efforts in China. A three-month loan to an American zoo brought China close to half a million dollars in precious foreign exchange.

**Bullish on bears:** Temporary panda exhibits have proliferated in recent years—from two pandas sent to Los Angeles during the 1984 Olympics, there were eight pairs scattered around North America in 1987 from San Diego to Busch Gardens in Florida, and approved loans and pending requests for nearly a dozen panda exhibits in 1988. Announcing the ban on September 20, a spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of Forestry said that requests “have become too numerous” and that they were endangering the future of the species.

Panda loans are big business for American zoos. The 1987 San Diego exhibit of a panda pair increased zoo attendance by 37 percent,

according to zoo officials, and brought in between \$5 million and \$7 million in increased revenues. In the most controversial of recent panda loans, an exhibit at the Toledo Zoo this past summer has produced an estimated \$15 million economic boom for the city and the zoo.

In fund-raising letters sent out to Toledo residents before the exhibit, zoo director William Dennler made no attempt to hide the money-making motivations of the panda loan. “The pandas will draw tourists from throughout the Midwest,” he wrote, “a boom for business and cultural organizations here.” Toledo was also looking to recoup renovation costs for a new primate facility through funds generated by the pandas. “The crux of the problem with Toledo is that they were going to make so much other money,” said one critic, “money that contributed directly to the development of the zoo.” As other critics put it, “The motivation was not panda conservation.”

It was the clearly commercial nature of the Toledo Zoo loan, and the fact that the two pandas on loan there were of prime breeding age, that sparked the public controversy over panda profiteering. In May, the World Wildlife Fund and the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA) filed suit against the Toledo Zoo and against the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service for issuing the import permit. The suit charged that the Toledo loan was in violation of federal and international laws and treaties that prohibited the commercial trafficking of endangered species.

**Only 1,000 left:** The Toledo loan was the straw that broke the camel's back as conservationists and zoo officials around the country became increasingly alarmed about the quantity and consequences of short-term loans. With only 80 to 100 pandas in captivity, and fewer than 1,000 animals left in the wild, the panda is hovering dangerously close to the brink of total extinction.

Captive breeding programs have a “dismal” record of success, according to Schaller and others, and economic development in western China is further eliminating the panda's natural habitat. Poaching of pandas in the wild poses the greatest threat to the species at the moment. Last spring Chinese

*Continued on page 22*



**China**  
**goes bearish**  
**on short-term**  
**panda loans**  
**to U.S. zoos.**